

Jersey Beat

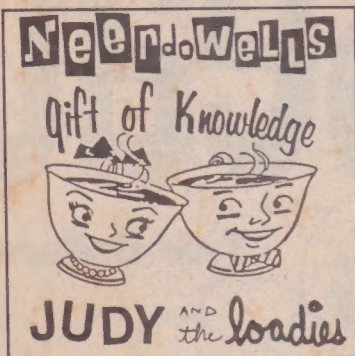
Issue #50 Winter 1993

Two Dollars



Girls Against Boys





NE'ER DO WELLS
 JUDY & THE LOADIES
 "GIFT OF KNOWLEDGE"
 SPLIT COMPACT DISC



SCREECHING WEASEL
 "YOU BROKE MY FUCKING HEART" 7" EP
 "ANTHEM FOR A NEW TOMORROW" LP/CS/CD
 "WIGGLE" T-SHIRT



RAOOUL
 "FRESH AND NUBILE"
 7" EP



NUISANCE
 "SUNNY SIDE DOWN" NEW LP/CS/CD
 "CONFUSION HILL" 1992 LP/CS/CD



PANSY DIVISION
 "TOUCH MY JOE CAMEL"
 7" EP
 includes free sticker



TILT
 SELF-TITLED 7" EP
 "PLAY CELL" LP/CS/CD
 "PLAY CELL" T-SHIRT

LOOK OUT!

PO BOX 11374 BERKELEY
 CA 94701 USA

Jersey Beat

Issue #50

Winter 1993

REVIEWING POLICY:

"You try to play it, we try to like it."

We review CDs, vinyl, demo tapes, live performances, video, and books.

Submission deadline for issue #51: January 1, 1994

Advertising deadline for issue #51: January 15, 1994

The schedule says this is the September issue but the calendar says it's mid-November. Obviously, somebody owes you an explanation. So direct from the home office in Weehawken, NJ, here is...

The Top Ten Reasons This Issue Is Late

1. Hired to ghost-write CMJ Music Marathon keynote speech for Jello Biafra.
2. Invested printing budget in secret Florio campaign slush fund.
3. That new Pearl Jam album is just *sooo* good we couldn't stop playing it.
4. Check for full-page ad from WEA bounced.
5. Entire computer department addicted to Tetris.
6. Fruit basket from Matador gave entire staff food poisoning.
7. Editorial Staff away in Mexico for three weeks on all-expenses paid Nirvana press junket.
8. Needed time to defend company from hostile corporate takeover by Maximum Rock N Roll.
9. Nude Mykel Board pinup photo rejected by printer as indecent.
10. My dog ate the record reviews.

IN MEMORIAM

This issue of Jersey Beat is dedicated to the memory of my grandfather, Alfonso Testa, who passed away at the age of 95 on October 21, 1993.

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HEAVY ROTATION

October-November 1993

Here's what we've been listening to. All these records were received too late to review in this issue but we really think they're swell.

Lemonheads - *Come On Feel The Lemonheads*

Playful pop for alternates of all ages

Buffalo Tom - *Big Red Letter Day*
More songs about longing and heartbreak

Redd Kross - *Phaseshifter*
Keith Partridge lives!

Yo La Tengo - *Painful*
Existential noise-rock with cool drums

Mutha's Day Out - *My Soul Is Wet*
White trash teens with a rap/rock thang

Ren and Stimpy - *You Eediot!!*
Happy happy, joy joy, I play this all the time

Pearl Jam - *Vs.*
So sue me. And I *hate* Led Zeppelin

Screeching Weasel - *Anthem For A New Tomorrow*
Gabba gabba, better than ever and just as snotty

Buzzcocks - *Trade Test Transmissions*
Defining the laws of geezer rock, these old poofs are still providing zippy punk thrills

Flop - *Whenever You're Ready*
The power-pop revival starts here.

Editor's Notebook

by Jim Testa

This really is the latest an issue of Jersey Beat has ever appeared - originally scheduled for late September or early October and not actually out until late November. Sorry 'bout that...

I used to worship Robert Christgau's rock criticism in the Village Voice. In fact, he and Lester Bangs were probably the most influential writers during my formative years. But in the last couple of years, Christgau has really been slipping. His writing - which has always been dense and analytical - has become completely impenetrable. And his taste? Sheesh. I just finished reading his annual Thanksgiving "Turkeys" column. Three of the albums on his turkeys list are a cinch for my annual Top Ten list. And while I hate to beat a dead horse, I can't help but feel that a lot of that has to do with the fact that I've seen all three of those bands live several times over the past year, and Uncle Bob hasn't. I just don't think you can judge something as visceral and emotional as rock and roll by sitting in your house and listening to CD's all day.

Have you ever read anything in the mainstream media about riot grrls that even remotely made sense? I haven't. I'm even thinking of taking up a collection to firebomb the offices of *Sassy*.

Here's my preliminary list of things about 1993 that drove me crazy:

- o Any variation of "Whoomp, there it is!"
- o Conan O'Brien trying to replace Letterman
- o Grunge fashion spreads in glossy magazines
- o Kurt Cobain interviews about how he hates being rich and famous
- o Having a cold all fucking year
- o 25 year old muscleheads slamdancing at concerts
- o Great shows at ABC No Rio with nobody in the audience because the bands were all from out of town
- o Bands that don't write back (*most* of them)
- o Six calls a day from publicists wanting to know if I've listened to the CD they just sent (and expecting me to call them back long-distance to let them know.) Yeah, right.
- o All those damn Tuesday and Thursday night shows at the Melody and Roxy in New Brunswick that don't start until 11:30 or 12. Doesn't anybody in that town work for a living?

If Green Day's Warner Bros. album goes gold and Screeching Weasel and The Queers get signed to a major label, I'm getting a new hobby.

BEN WEASEL IS A PROFESSIONAL PUNK!

WHEEZER

DAMN..... THERE JUST AIN'T NUTHIN' TO DO IN THIS TOWN.

BEN WAS STRUTTIN DOWN TO THE RECORD STORE. BORED OUT OF HIS SKULL + SOBER.. MAYBE HIS LUCK WILL CHANGE.

HEYVY RA+BOY!! WHATS SHAKIN'??

HIVA WEASEL! I GOT TWO TICKETS TO GO SEE THE RUSH PRINUS SHOW... WELL, WANNA GO???

WHY SURE!! I'VE HAD WRITERS BLOCK FOR 3 DAYS.. I NEEDED SOMETHING TO SLAG!! THATS THE ONE BENEFIT OF SEEING SHIT BANDS!!

YAY!

WHERE'D YOU GET THOSE TICKETS FROM WIMP? A SCALPER MAYBE??

MR. CLEAN

POF!! PAF

DON'T YOU EVER BUMP INTO ME AGAIN FUKFACE!!

SHIT!

3 POINTS!

AAAAAGH!

PUNT!

GET LOST FAGGOT!!

TEE HEE!

AND THAT ENDS THIS ISSUE OF MAXI-PUNKER. SLEEP TIGHT UNTIL NEXT TIME. LATER.

BLIP! BLEEP!

An Editorial

JabberRocky

*'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
did gyre & gymbie in the wabe
All mimsy were the borogroves
And the mome wraths outgrabe*

- "Jabberwocky" by Lewis Carroll

On the occasion of our 50th issue, I've been giving a lot of thought to what's changed since I started this zine back in 1982. And the answer I came up with was, everything."

Gina Arnold, a rock critic from San Francisco, talks a lot about this in her new book *Route 666: The Road To Nirvana*. After Nirvana's surprise success in 1992 (7 million copies of *Nevermind* in the U.S., double that worldwide), nothing has been the same - not the bands, not the music industry, not even the audience. "I grew up thinking everything had already happened," Arnold writes. Then Nirvana came along and showed her that she was wrong.

The last year and a half have been nuts and it gets nuttier all the time. You can try and pretend that you're so punk rock that the ripples from the splash *Nevermind* made will never affect you, but you'd be fooling yourself. Just leaf through this issue of *Jersey Beat* and count the number of ads. I have Kurt Cobain to thank for putting this thing in the black for the first time in 11 years. And that's a pretty big ripple.

When I started writing about music, it was easy to hate corporate rock and everything it stood for. Almost everybody who worked at the major labels was an asshole; half of them were there because their uncle was a vice-president someplace in the company, and the other half were only interested in snorting coke backstage with Aerosmith. You almost never met anyone who worked at a big label who was there because they liked music. All the real fans worked in record stores or slaved for peanuts at the indie labels. Nowadays, though, all those cool people I knew from those days have jobs at the major labels, and most of the bands I like are there too.

More to the point, I used to be able to ignore Major Label Rock with impunity because the industry ignored me. No more. A big part of the reason why this issue is so late is because I've been teetering on the brink of total burnout. There was a time when I used to dream of getting all the free records I wanted; now, the glut of CD's coming every day in the mail has gotten overwhelming. Sometimes I look at the stacks of new "product" in my room and I don't know what to do with it all. That's scary.

The latest wrinkle to all this nonsense has been the sudden rush by the big guys to start signing punk-rock bands - Clutch, Jawbox, Bad Religion, Green Day. But even before that started, there's been a perceptible change in the punk scene. It used to be that if you played hardcore, you were a hardcore band, and it didn't matter if you were Bad Religion or Black Flag or 7 Seconds or the Descendents.

But lately, the term "punk rock" has come back into fashion to differentiate some hardcore bands from others; Screeching Weasel and Green Day are "punk rock" bands, Lifetime and Mind Over Matter are "hardcore bands." It's as if the punk scene has created its own little hierarchy, it's own version of "alternative rock."

I recently came back from a short vacation in Florida, where I met up with the Queers and Pink Lincolns who were doing some shows together. The Queers have been together in one form or another since 1981, but it's only been recently - since Screeching Weasel "discovered" them and got them signed to Lookout - that the band has really developed any sort of national recognition. And yet here they were, touring on their first album for Lookout, asking for - and getting - \$150 guarantees at every show. If you read the tour diaries that appear in fanzines like Maximum Rock n Roll - for instance, Mykel Board's recent account of Artless' summer tour - you know that a \$150 guarantee is a lot for a punk rock band without a national reputation. On the other hand, that Bad Religion/Green Day/ Seaweed tour was getting a \$5800 guarantee!

That Bad Religion/Green Day was an interesting experience for me. It wasn't that long ago that Green Day was supposed to be playing ABC No Rio, which holds about 100 people if you stuff them in with a shoe horn. The band didn't show up for that gig, so their New York City debut turned out to be this Bad Religion show at Roseland -- in front of about 2000 people. Seeing that many kids at a "punk" show was weird in itself.

More telling, though, was what went on behind the scenes. As you've probably heard by now, Bad Religion has signed to Atlantic, Green Day to Warner Brothers. Bad Religion's Brett Gurewitz still owns Epitaph Records, however, and it was Epitaph's publicist who made sure that every fanzine geek in the Greater New York area got invited to this show. Warner Brothers, from what I could tell, didn't make any effort to accommodate any of Green Day's old supporters, though. And while Bad Religion hasn't changed a bit, Green Day has added a lot of goofy, cartoonish stage shtick to their show, apparently thinking that Warner Brothers is going to market them as the new Dead Milkmen or something. Frankly, I think their music can stand on its own, without a lot of stupid market gimmicks that will turn the band into some kind of moron novelty act (like Elektra tried to do with Ween.) It'll be interesting to see what happens in the next couple of months. If even one of these groups by some miracle has a hit, it's going to be fun watching all those major label A&R guys trying to wangle their way onto the guest list at ABC No Rio.

Fun? No, it's nuts. It's jabberwocky. It's brillig. But we'll be here to keep an eye on everything for you. And maybe even gimbel a little. But that's it.

I'm getting too old to gyre anymore.

Kevin "G.G." Allin died of an apparent drug overdose in the early hours of Monday, June 28. He was 36 years old.

G.G. Allin was a confrontational performance artist like no other. Clad in a soiled jockstrap, his body smeared with blood and his own feces, Allin's performances consisted of brutally short punk-rock set pieces, usually punctuated by random acts of violence against himself and his audience. He gave his last performance on the day before he died, at the Gas Station on Avenue B, and in many ways it summed up what he had become.

The show began when G.G. entered the club in his trademark jock. He defecated outside and smeared feces across his body. The actual performance consisted of only two songs; after that, reports vary, but apparently an act of violence abruptly ended the show. A small riot ensued as the audience bolted for the exits. Squad cars arrived minutes later, sirens howling, but Allin - naked except for a hat and smeared with blood and feces - managed to hail a cab and make his escape.

I spoke to a number of people who were at the show and they all agreed that Allin's performance was nothing short of brilliant, one of the finest he's ever given in New York City. But when I asked for details - did G.G. really break a bottle over a kid's face in the audience? what started the riot? - they all acknowledged that they hadn't seen what happened. They weren't even watching at the time. It wasn't the music or the singing that they deemed "brilliant," it was the screams of terror and the mindless panic that G.G. instigated in his audience. G.G. Allin wasn't GWAR or Green Jelly. He didn't use stage blood and plastic body parts. Everything he did was real. That was his genius.

The Velvet Underground brought drugs and sadism to pop music; G.G. brought everything else - blood, profanity, nudity, shit, and sudden, horrifying physical acts of violence. Earlier in his career, he played an important role musically as well; the collection *Banned In The U.S.A.* on ROIR cassette chronicles those early songs, which borrowed the simple three-chord energy of the Ramones and the infectious melodies of power pop, and infused them with Allin's unique bar-

barism. Songs like "Drink, Fight, And Fuck" and "You Know That You Don't Like Me (And I Don't Like You)" were not only catchy but clever, anthems for the dysfunctional that are still covered by punk bands today.

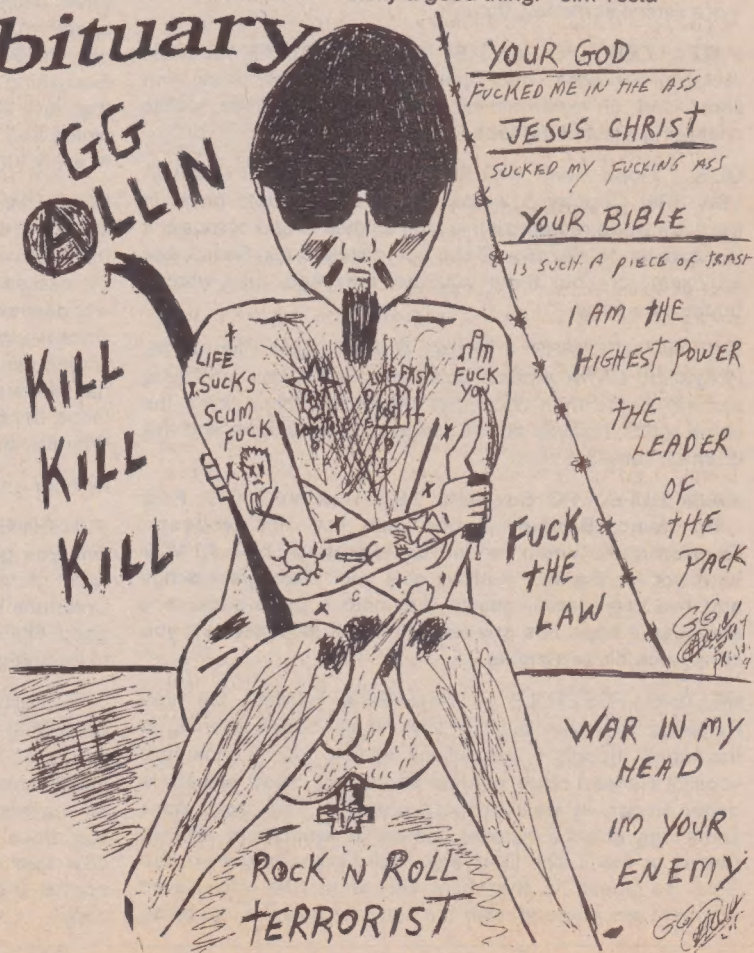
Johnny Puke, the downtown performance artist in whose apartment G.G. died, said that his greatest fear was that Allin would only be remembered as some sort of animal. "He was my friend, and it's important to know that he was capable of being a friend," Puke said. "Most people put up with so much bullshit in their lives, but G.G. never did anything he didn't want to do. He did everything his way. That's why he was important. That's how he should be remembered."

Like many an idiot savant, G.G. was ruthlessly exploited - dozens of small record labels released recordings of his work without his permission or knowledge, and there is a thriving underground trade in videos of his performances, many taped by Allin's brother, Merle. "A lot of people thought G.G. wasn't in control, but I think he wanted them to think that

way," Puke said. "He was more in control of what he was doing than a lot of people knew." A year ago, when Allin was serving out a rape conviction in Jackson State Prison in Michigan, he wrote me a letter. Allin said he was sick of being compared to "outlaw" performers like Ice-T and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

"Freedom doesn't mean the Red Hot Chili Peppers posing nude on the cover of Rolling Stone with their hands over their cocks. Freedom means putting your hands aside and letting what you've got hang out for all to see," Allin wrote. "The Chili Peppers and Ice-T are basically still playing by the rules of the industry that owns them... Well, in my case, nobody else tells me what to do. I call my own shots. Maybe that's why I am the only real fucking rock and roll underground that really does matter anymore. Because I cannot be bought and sold. I am the real rock and roll terrorist." G.G. Allin, dead at 36. Maybe he was a sick fuck. But he was our sick fuck. The world's a safer place without him. But I can't bring myself to believe that's necessarily a good thing. - Jim Testa

Obituary



Howdy, neighbors! It's been a hell of a Summer for me. Hassles from all directions, including the memory on this word processor fucking up royally. Ah, me. Moan, groan, bitch & whine. There, now we all feel better. Got a baker's dozen cassettes on this trip. I'm afraid I'm not feeling very verbose this issue. Sorry.

The only item which came direct was a 5 song demo from JOE CANZANO, PO Box 733, Cranford NJ 07016. He labeled it "straight ahead rock." It's a good DIY demo, although I ain't too certain I would classify this music as straight rock. It's a bit too laid back and soft, plus the lyrics tell a story in each song. I'd call it pop/rock, with perhaps a bit of the anachronistic term "easy listening." I liked the songs, which were well-written.

DRIVE CHOIR - "Tilt" (PO Box 110065, Hialeah FL 33011-0065) The liners notes include the warning, "Unauthorized reproduction is subject to prosecution and sodomization." They include Genesis among their thank yous. I consider them better than that band of English wimps. A basic trio, with one guy named Johnny Voltage, and fairly straight-ahead pop rock. Nothing I had planned to dub onto another tape, thus saving my ass. Worth a few more listens someday, though.

FUZZY LOGIC (PO Box 3154, Wayne NJ 07470) Yer basic rock trio. Strangely, they open this four-number demo with some sort of experimental stuff that sounds like robots chattering. Rest of the tape is pretty good.

GUS - "Rope Hunt" (PO Box 8187, Victoria BC CANADA V8W 3R8) Country & western aficionados would never in the wide world recognize this stuff as their brand of music. It is, however, totally c&w. Done completely punk. Seems like an oxymoron, but there you are. Oh yeah, they want 5 bucks for a copy.

THE HANGBOXERS - "Prize" (7188 Sunset Blvd #209, Hollywood CA) A 4-piece doing alternative rock, no better and no worse than 300 other bands out there doing the same shtick. I played all five songs around 19 times and this is what I came up with.

MAJIK DURJ - PO Box 2345, New York NY 10009) Four song demo. Basically a one man act. Hot prog-rock. Excellent stuff. "Virgin Tender" could probably be a #1 MTV hit if not for the line "fucking only you." Two great songs and two very good ones to dub onto a great party tape someday. I hope this guy isn't into anal molestation if you infringe on his copyrights.

MELTING HOPEFULS - "Heal Back Harder" (38 Van Rensslear St, Belleville NJ 07109) When I began listening to this tape, I thought it was Juliana Hatfield. I don't know how vocalist Renee LoBue will feel about that. She's actually a better singer, at least to these old ears. The group does some fairly eclectic material, somewhat reminiscent of Blake Babies or the B 52s. One really weird piece of shit entitled "Feel So Queer" is, thankfully, very short. The other seven numbers are all good, with the first four and the last being

excellent.

MIRROR GARDEN (PO Box 4613, Lakewood CA 90711) 3 song demo. Five piece band doing, guess what? Opera! I really liked the opening number, "Michelle." Of course, the fact it contains the line, "Better days will surely come your way" - something I would DEARLY love to believe... may have had something to do with it. Excellent rock and roll.

RING OF MYTH (PO Box 836, Monrovia CA 91017) Nice picture on the liner notes. A basic pop/rock trio, at first glance. They remind me of some band or another, but I ain't a music historian like some people, and can't think of who it is. The tape has songs on both sides. It starts with



"Mountain Mother," a song I swear I've heard on the radio, and goes into rougher pop, then speedy thrash. There are three short instrumentals, a song in the alternative rock spectrum, and a number that Mick Hale would love - it sounds like they beat the drum set to death with the guitars. Everything's written by lead vocalist Danny Flores. I thought that last song was an instrumental too, but they've got words in it, which don't fit at all. Something to surprise you at every turn!

SOMETIME SUDAY - "Pain" (ART Records, 4119 N State Rd #1203, Ft Lauderdale FL 33011) First thing I noticed about this tape was the beautiful fluorescent color. At the end of the cassette is a short conversation, during which someone wonders whether to keep "Blur." Obviously they decided to, since it's the opening cut. Too bad, as that number sounds something like Joe Cocker in mortal agony and other other half dozen songs are all good, thrash-tinged metal/rock. Good thing I listened to more than one song on the tape. Why do I dislike the opening

number on so many of these tapes, I wonder?

SUNSHINE BLIND (61 Center St #6, Clifton NJ 07011) Hey, Jim, you got any pictures of this chick? Some really good rock music performed by a gal with a great voice. Unfortunately the tape quality, at least on mine, ain't all that good. Oh well. No info or liner notes, but the group appears to be one gal and two guys.

THE UNINVITED - "Pop This" (PO Box 5229, Beverly Hills CA 90209) One of those tapes I don't want to take out of the machine. However, since I'm under the deadline gun... highly enjoyable humorous pop from a California quartet. All the songs appear to have a message but all have a humorous tint. Good singing, excellent playing. Kind of a c&w slant, the band uses banjo and madolin, besides the normal tools. Very good release. Write them and get a copy!



Photo by Justine DeMetrick

by Jim Testa

I've rarely met anyone who didn't like Garden Variety. (Vinny, the guy who runs MintTone Records, liked them so much that he agreed to put out their debut 7-inch after seeing them play their first gig!) Their sound just bounces with energy and a positive good vibe, and even though they're endlessly compared (with some justification) to Jawbreaker, they're also one of the more original punk bands to emerge from Long Island's Old School-style hardcore scene. They're also three of the nicest guys you're likely to meet anywhere, but especially in the dog-eat-dog New York music scene. They're always at shows,

Garden Variety

Not just another pretty face

supporting their friends' bands and turning out to see other bands they like. You'd be surprised how rare a thing that's become.

But maybe the most unique thing about Garden Variety is that two of them are Italian guys named Anthony - Anthony Romano on vocals and bass, Anthony Rizzo on guitar - and neither one of them is called Tony. The drummer's name is Louis, and if anyone knows his last name, I couldn't get them to tell me.

But I did get Garden Variety to tell me some other stuff, like how they feel about being a pop/core band with melodies and catchy riffs in a scene that's dominated by metal-core thrash bands and an audience that's mostly composed of angry bald kids with scowling faces and combat boots. They deserve better, and maybe that's finally starting to happen. Their first full-length album should be out early next year on Gern Blandsten Records, and they're starting to get the kind of

gigs where they don't have to play to a roomful of sweaty teenagers on Saturday or Sunday afternoons. Not that the guys in Garden Variety would complain, mind you...

"I'm not going to come right out and say we don't want to play anymore hardcore shows," said Anthony Romano (hereafter referred to as Roman, to make things easier.) "The problem is that a show like we played today [a Bond Street Cafe HC matinee with Wheelchair and Mind Over Matter], you could tell a lot of that audience didn't really like us. We're not their kind of music. And the thing is that I know we would go over great if we could play with bands like, oh, Superchunk or someone like that, alternative bands, but it's just so hard to get those kinds of gigs."

"The thing is, we're from Long Island, all our friends are from Long Island, and all the bands we know are from Long Island," added Louis. "So that's who we wind up doing most of our gigs

with. And most of the other bands on Long Island are thrash bands. So it's tough."

Although I tried to bait them into saying they didn't want to be a hardcore band anymore, they wouldn't bite. "Look, we *like* hardcore, that's what we listen to," said Roman. "It'd be dumb to say that we don't want to play anymore hardcore shows. It's just that we'd just like the opportunity to play other kinds of shows as well. Because I really think that's where our audience is, with more of a pop or an alternative audience."

Garden Variety is constantly compared to Jawbreaker - their melodies, Roman's vocals, the way they write riffs, everything they do sounds a little bit like Jawbreaker. So who's their biggest idol?

"To tell you the truth, we had never even heard

Jawbreaker when we started this band," said Roman. "I don't think their first album was even out yet when we started playing together."

"Maybe it was out but we hadn't seen them yet and we certainly never tried to sound like Jawbreaker," said Rizzo. "Our big heroes were the Descendents. If we tried to sound like anybody, it was them."

The band's future may well determine whether Garden Variety gets its chance to tour and play for a larger audience or stays stuck in the middle of the Long Island mosh scene. "We have some decisions to make pretty soon because one of us has a chance to go to college and we have to know whether we want to pursue this full-time," explained Roman. "I don't know. I'd love, we'd all

love to do this all our time, to just be a band and not have to work day jobs. I guess that's every band's dream. And we are serious about what we're doing. It's just that you look at the odds and the number of bands that don't make it..."

"...and you've got everybody else in your life, your parents and everybody, asking you what you're going to do with the rest of your life, it makes it tough to stick it out," added Louis. "We're going to wait until our album comes out and then see if we can put a tour together and then maybe try to go to Europe, and then we'll see how it goes."

In late November, Garden Variety got a chance to open for Seven Year Bitch and the Unsane at the Grand, one of NYC's bigger clubs. It's just a first step away from non-paying gigs at Bond Street and ABC No Rio, playing in front of the same 50 kids from Long Island all the time, and one small step closer to making their dream come true, but at least it's a step in the right direction. Some times, the nice guys don't finish last. Here's hoping.

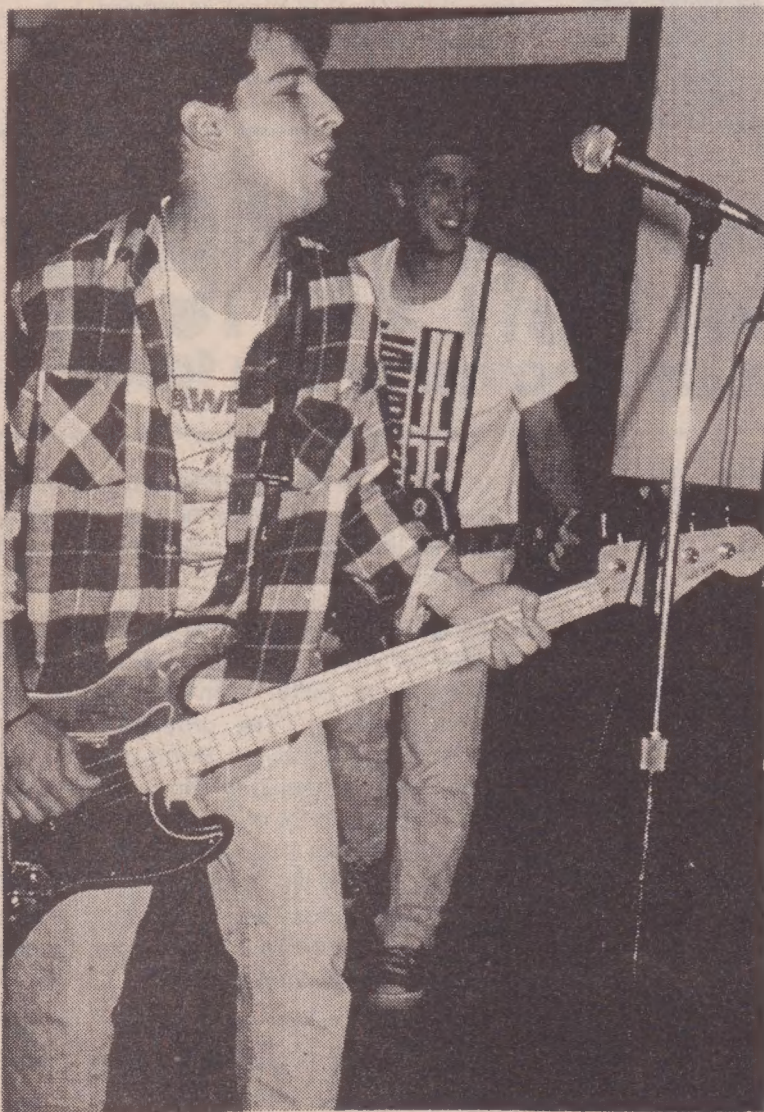


Photo by Jim Testa

by Tom Brebric

The Cucumbers are ■ alternative pop band who can trace their roots back to the early days of the Hoboken scene. They hit the scene in 1983 with the release of "The Cucumbers" EP, followed by the "Fresh Cucumbers" EP in 1984, a 1985 lp called Who Betrays Me, and ■ 12-inch single from that album the next year for their cover of Elvis' "All Shook Up." Somewhere around 1989, the group started a long hiatus, as the husband/wife team of Jon Fried and Deena Shoskes settled down to raising their two children. Now in 1993, a ■■■ album is scheduled to hit the shelves in late Fall. It's called ReCucumber, and will be on Zero Hour Records. The album included unreleased material from 1989 as well as some new songs. I met with Jon and Deena over cookies and beer ■■■ ■■ discussed the past, present, and future of the Cukes...

Q: On your first release there was ■ song called "Susie's Getting Married." Then on the second EP there was "Susie's Breakdown." Whatever happened to Susie?

Jon: Well, you're the first to know this, but on our upcoming album, there's ■ song called "Susie's Ex-Husbands 3-Suit." Things didn't go too tell for her.

Q: Were you part of the original Hoboken scene?

Deena: We came right after the Bongos. Everyone assumed we were part of the scene and moved to Hoboken because of the scene. We didn't even know there were bands there.

Jon: We moved there because of the cheap rent and the good Italian delis.

Q: The Cucumbers got ■ lot of good reviews but didn't sell many records. Why?

Jon: That's the old syndrome, but we got good distribution

cucumbers Back In Season

from our label (Profile,) which ■■■ ■ rap label with ■ desire to diversify. They signed us but let us go later, although they were real cool about it.

Q: Tell me about your hiatus.



BABYLAND

UNREST

NEW ALBUM

‘ *perfect teeth* ’

(TRACK 2) "CATH CARROLL" • A thunderous tribute to winsome British indie heroine • A set of private observations gone public • "Unrest is the most fascinating group to emerge from the Washington DC area since The Warren Commission." —the B10 • Group name taken from a Henry Cavendish • Groovy quote from press source • Graduates of Lollapalooza '93 • Live! stored demonstration records, post punk Bent formalists • Mixed in the Modest Building



333
Teen
Globe

Deena: We put out the last thing in 1987. In 1988, we toured ■ lot - we should've put out ■ album. After we got released from Profile, Jon had some major surgery, our drummer quit, and the band started to fall apart. At this time I was pregnant, but just before our first child was born, we recorded an album over the weekend. We did that because we had been playing those songs for so long that we were really tight, and we knew we could cut an album quickly.

Q: When did you start the children's music group, and what's that all about?

Deena: In the summer of 1990, I started collaborating with Alice (Genese) of Sexpod, and we started Over The Moon. We played our first "gig" at my nephew's party and then we played at the River City Fair in Hoboken. ■ was easy to do and we got a lot of nice press for it, and had ■ great time too. We also did a live concert for WNYE, which has children's programming several hours ■ day. We even got an offer from BMG, but it fell through.

Q: Where have the Cucumbers played since your return?

Jon: We only played one showcase at CBGB's - we don't have ■ band now. We didn't even have any intention of playing until we were asked to do an acoustic set.

Q: Have you been in touch with any of the bands you played with in the good old days?

Deena: Frank Gianini, the drummer from the Bongos and Strange Cave, is our drummer in Over The Moon, and Alice used to be in Gut Bank (back in the mid 80's.) Alice's husband, Ivan, used to be in Ritual Tension, who played out back then too.

Jon: We want to do ■ studio album next, as we have our own studio at home and have ■ lot of material. If there's interest, we'll take short trips.

Q: What's the main thing that got you back into music?

Jon: Ray (from Ground Zero) called us. We weren't really thinking about music, but he put the bug in our ears. We were sad when things came to a halt, but we needed to take a break. We were very prolific, but our songs kept getting rejected. We did the same thing for, like, nine years. You start out and you're excited, you play out, more people come to see you. And so at some point you get expectations, you want to make a living at it. This affects everyone at some point. People in alternative music want to make it, it's as if the music itself is not enough. Why do so many bands that start out great, why do they go sour? They run out of gas and you get into this grind of wanting to make it. I mean, for us, this hiatus was great. I didn't even think about the music business for a couple of years.

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Spin Doctors: The Next Generation

by Jim Testa

Nirvana may have changed the world of alternative rock, but locally, the band that's had the biggest influence on how things work in the music scene has been the Spin Doctors. For years, there was a clearly defined hierarchy to gigging when you were a New York band: You started out at the shit clubs, playing crummy gigs at ridiculous hours on weeknights, and eventually moved up to CBGBs and Maxwell's. Those were the gigs to get, and once you started playing there regularly, and touring in between, the A&R types would come a'knocking. That's the way Helmet did it, and Sonic Youth before them, going back through the 80's.

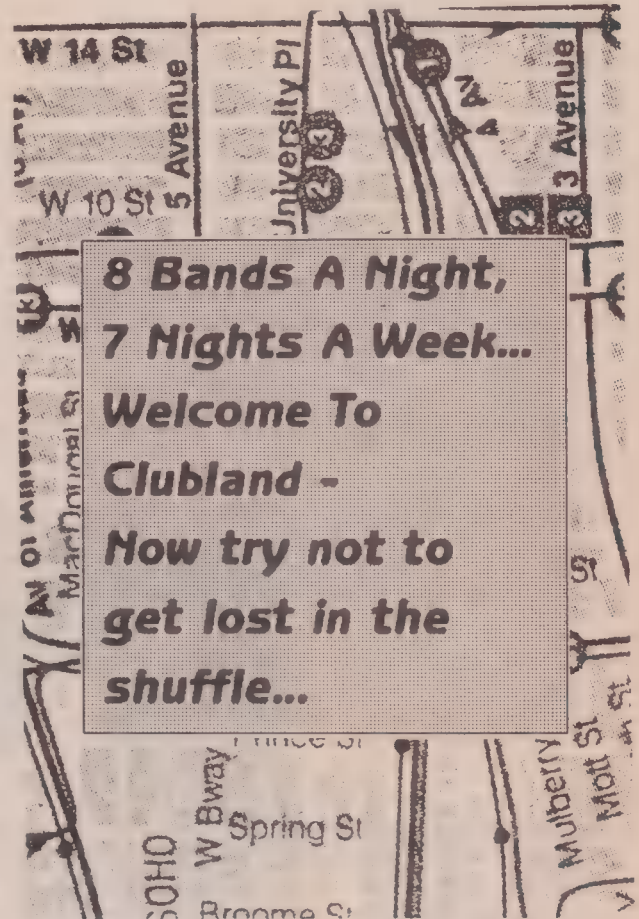
Then along came the Spin Doctors, who never played CBGB or Maxwell's, who didn't give a fuck about those trendy clubs. The Spin Doctors played Nightingales and all the other divey little Lower East Side dumps for a year, then started showcasing at the Wetlands. Next thing you know, they're major rotation on MTV and selling a quadrillion albums.

And so, for the dozens (if not hundreds) of bands in New York trying to make it these days, that's become the new role model: It's just like that board game we used to play — kids, Chutes & Ladders. Play the shitholes first — Underworld, Spiral, Street Level, Lion's Den... Climb a rung of the ladder. Do your CBGB audition night, get a little buzz going...try to catch the eye of the booker at Nightingales. Climb another rung. Start playing the shit clubs, but on weekends. Get a following, build your mail list. A few more rungs up the ladder. And keep plugging away to get that Wetlands gig. Oops! Your drummer quit to move to Seattle? Slide down the chute and back to Go.

It worked for the Spin Doctors, and Blues Traveller right after them. Bands like God Street Wine, The Authority, and the Choosy Mothers are right behind them. But it's a tough gig, this New York City grind circuit. For one thing, the competition is immense. Street Level, Underworld, Bond Street Cafe, Brownies, New Music Cafe, Lonestar Roadhouse, CBGB, Lion's Den, Spiral... they're all booking anywhere from five to eight bands a night. Add the odd promotions at The Bank and Tilt, then throw in the class gigs at Wetlands, the Grand, Roseland, and The Academy Theater. On a typical Thursday night, there might be as many as sixty other bands playing within a few blocks of your show. How do you find an audience in that kind of crowd? How do you get noticed? What makes one band move up a few rungs of the ladder, and another band stay grounded in the endless round of tawdry weeknight gigs in front of no people for no money?

It's a weird scene. For one thing, although most of these venues are bars, it's become a de facto all-ages circuit. The clubs need bodies, and they're not about to start proofing. On any given night, at a club like the Underworld or Street Level, at least one of the bands on the bill will likely still be in their teens, and their fans will come and watch them, regardless of their age. There's also a sort of anti-Darwinian principle at work here: Everybody says there's no place to play in New York, but in fact, there are too many gigs available. Even the most horrible, untalented, unlistenable bands can play shows. And for the audience, it's an endless process of sitting through a lot of crap to find the few good new bands on the scene. It's a volatile scene, too, everything changes so quickly: The clubs, the promoters, the bands. The first two bands we chose to appear in this story broke up before we could interview them.

But in the end, we chose four bands at random from the hundreds of bands currently playing the downtown club scene, and got them to tell us their story. Each one occupies a different rung on the ladder. Here they are.



SURREAL

Ian Katz - drums; Al Semerdjian, vocals; Dan Sullivan, bass; Tom Sullivan, guitar; Fletcher Winston, keyboards. Home base: Long Island. Ages: 20-22

In a lot of ways, Surreal is the typical band stuck in the middle of the post-Spin Doctors NY scene. But it's their unique qualities that caught my attention. Their jangly pop sound harkens back to a pre-grunge era when most of the local bands you saw in clubs sounded like R.E.M., but more importantly, they come across - both on stage and in person - as nice guys. Friendly, down to earth, and really into music, not just their careers. That's becoming a rare commodity these days.

Surreal began more than six years ago as a high school band on Long Island, but the current lineup didn't gel and the group didn't seriously start playing clubs until 1991. "You know the Court Tavern in New Brunswick? Well, there are a lot of bars like that on Long Island," explains singer Al Semerdjian. "We burned a lot of bridges, there are lots of places we can never go back to there. Yelling, screaming, fistfights... Tom and Mark, that Irish blood would start boiling every time some club owner would try and rip us off... But it was a place a start."

After building a following on their native Long Island, the band began playing the Lower East Side bar circuit about a year ago. Currently, they've secured a bi-weekly Friday night gig at Street Level, and frequently turn up at Nightingales, Tilt, and the Lion's Den.

So what's it like playing a show on a bill with six other bands, knowing that there are sixty other bands playing at the same time within a mile of your club?

"When you mention those numbers, how many bands there are out there playing every night, it is kind of intimidating and a little disheartening," says Al. "But when you're onstage, it's completely different. You're the center of attention, it's like you're the only band there is, and all you can think about are the people who are right there in front of you. That's how you get through it."

At least Surreal seems to actually enjoy what they're doing. The band enjoys a light hearted rapport with its audience - unlike a lot of frontmen these days, Al actually smiles a lot - and the group is one of the few I've talked to that actually recommended other bands they like.

"There is a lot of competition in this scene," says guitarist Tom Sullivan. "I think a lot of that is just a self-defense mechanism though. There are so many bands out there, the only way you can hang onto your self-esteem is convince yourself that you're the only band that matters and everybody else sucks. I think we're lucky that we're confident enough about what we're doing to have friends in other bands, bands that we like to watch play."

Sullivan's stinging leads and bright, treble guitar sound are the keys to Surreal's sound, filled out by Fletcher Winston's sonorous keyboards and Alan's melodic vocals. "I love U2, I love R.E.M., and while I don't think we sound like those bands, that's definitely where I'm coming from in terms of playing guitar," says Tom. "It's definitely a Retro 80's sound," adds Alan. "Not that we're retro or trying to sound like someone else, but it's not grunge rock, it's the kind of music you heard back around 1981, when we were just getting into music."

"People ask me where I'm going," says drummer Ian Katz, a dead ringer for the Spin Doctors' drummer, Aaron Comess. "I tell them I want us on a big label someday. That's what we'd like to do."

"But to tell you the truth, I don't know how we're going to get there yet," admits Alan. "I don't know what the next step is going to be, how to go up to that next level. Or even what that next level is. Playing Nightingales on a regular basis? Wetlands? I don't know. All we can do right now is play these shows, keep building the mail list, and write new songs."

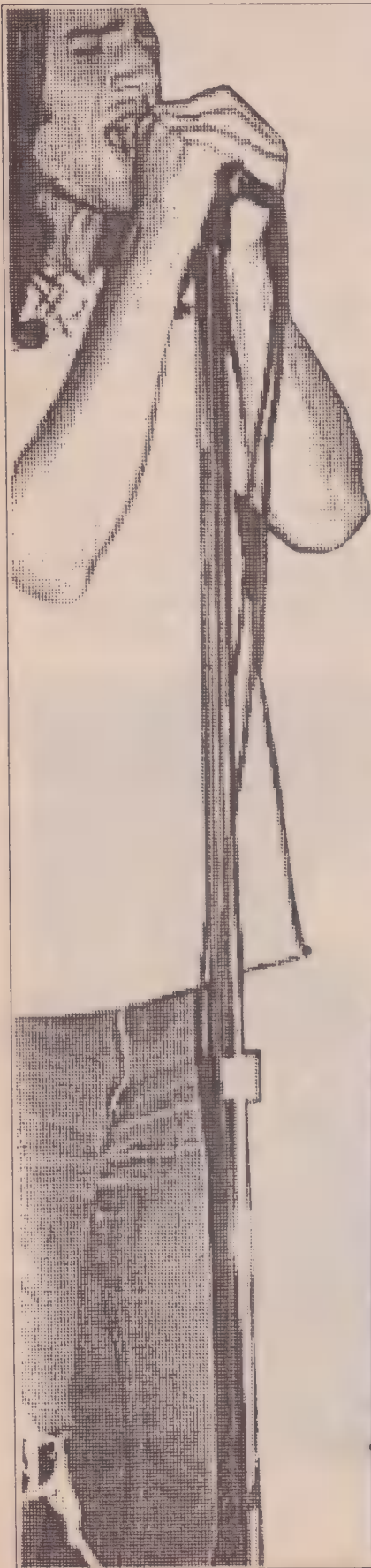
The band does like the Spin Doctors, and while their sound is altogether different - "we're not a jamming band, we don't have that trippy Grateful Dead vibe going at all," says Tom Sullivan - they do see them as something of a role model.

"I was outside the Underworld one night and I saw Mark from the Spin Doctors pass by, and I wanted to say something to him, say I was in a band or something," says Ian. "He must have seen that look in my eye and understood what I was thinking, because he pointed to the door and said, Hey, I used to play that place. Somehow, it's good knowing that, knowing that we're playing the same places that a really successful band like that played when they were starting out. The way I look at it, yeah, these gigs suck, but at least we're playing weekends now. Who knows where we'll be in a year?"



SURREAL

Photo by Jim Testa



EVE'S PLUM

Colleen Fitzpatrick, vocals; Michael Brighton, guitar;
Ben Brighton, drums; Chris Giammalvo, bass

Home base: Staten Island

Ages: Mid twenties

**STREET
LEVEL**

Eve's Plum are a grind circuit success story, a local band that went from Tuesday nights at CBGB to Epic Records in less than a year. According to the rules of the game, these guys have reached the top of the ladder. But Eve's Plum are finding out that a major label isn't necessarily the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow...

The Sony Music Group sends me promos all the time, a lot of it by artists I would never write about. Three times, I got something from Epic and wrote back a note to the publicist, saying, "Sorry, this isn't my territory, but you just signed a local band named Eve's Plum that I'd like to write about." And three times, nothing happened. It's tough being the new band on a huge roster. Pearl Jam sneezes and three Epic publicity hacks are there with a kleenex; Eve's Plum could catch triple pneumonia and they'd be lucky to get an aspirin.

"Bands have to wake up and realize that just because you're signed doesn't mean you have the world on a string. A lot of people think that once you get signed, you just sit down and relax, but really, that's when you have to get to work," says the band's guitarist, Michael Brighton. "Even though we're on Epic, we're still at the stage where no one knows who we are. We still have to get out there and play all we can, and hope ■■■ find our audience."

Rumors abound that Eve's Plum's fortuitous rise from a local Staten Island bar band to major label status was due to lead singer Colleen Fitzpatrick's short-lived career ■■■ actress (she played Debbie Harry and Sonny Bono's bratty daughter in John Waters' *Hairspray*.) In fact, Brighton says, it had nothing to do with Fitzpatrick's show business connections.

SPIRAL

†UNDERWORLD†

**DESMOND'S
TAVERN**

WE'RE NOW
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7 NIGHTS
A WEEK



BROWNIES

CONTINENTAL



"We played Staten Island and New Brunswick a lot at first, we liked it a lot better than the clubs in the city," Brighton says. "It's just a lot friendlier, and you get to meet other bands a lot more easily than at those clubs in the city where you're on a bill with eight other bands every night. It always used to really bother me at those places that I could never get to talk to the other bands because everything is so rushed and competitive."

It was at one of the band's New Jersey gigs, at a time when the group was planning on recording and releasing their own CD, that they met a local producer who offered to take them into the studio. That session led to the contacts that eventually saw Eve's Plum sign to Epic.

The band's debut album, *envy*, is a testament to Eve Plum's commitment to songcraft. "I think the biggest reason for our success is our songwriting," says Brighton. "We really worked hard on creating good songs. And besides that, I really like pop music. It's an edgier thing live. But in the studio, or when we're writing, we're trying to create songs that people will remember, with individual guitar sounds and rhythms that are special to each song."

The band recently visited England, playing mostly small clubs. The rest of the Fall will be spent back in the U.S. on a college tour. And then it will be back to the old grind. But at least now, they won't have to settle for Wednesday nights at the Spiral. The last show they played in New York was at the Wetlands, with Sony labelmates Gumball.

"Actually, the last show we played at the Spiral was really good," says Brighton. "And I really like Underworld too, I just wish the sound system was better. But I like playing there, I think it gives you the feel that you're in a real rock and roll club. I like that ambience."

LOST SOULS

Paul, drums; Will, vocals, guitars;
Charlie, bass, vocals; Greg, guitars.

Home base: Westfield, NJ

Age: 16-17

If playing the NY clubs really is like a game of Chutes & Ladders, then the Lost Souls represent the bottom-most rung. They're not only a new band trying to establish a name for themselves, but they're doing it in their teens. The youngest member just turned 16, the oldest member turns 17 later this year.

"It's really hard for us to play in the city because none of us even drives yet," says Will Atwell, the group's bassist. "Imagine how hard it is trying to get your friends to come to shows on the train." And then there are all the other complications: Curfews, parents, school, money... The only thing that hasn't been a problem has been the supposed "Over 21" rule. "As far as us getting shows, or our friends getting into clubs, our age hasn't been a problem," Will reports. "It's different if you go up to the bar and try and buy a beer. If we want a beer, we just go to a deli. But as far as just getting into the clubs, the Over 21 rule isn't enforced at all."

So far, the Lost Souls have played Street Level, the Bank, and Bond Street Cafe, an eye opening experience to four youngsters who had never ventured into the club scene before. "Every day we do this, I learn something new," Will says. "Mostly we're learning how hard it is even to get noticed. There are just so many bands out there. All you can do is play hard and try and do your best and hope someone notices you. Nobody has even interviewed us before you." The band has deliberately avoided making a big issue of its age; "we want to be recognized for our music, not some kind of novelty act like Old Skull," Will says. "After we've played and people have seen us, we might tell them how old we are. Mostly, they're amazed."

Most bands don't need their parents' permission to stay out late on gig nights either, another hurdle that the Lost Souls have had to overcome. "My dad really hates the band. I think that's because most of the anger in my music is directed at him, and he knows it," says Will. "Luckily, my mom loves it. She says that anything that keeps me off the streets and out of trouble is great." Despite the drawbacks of trying to compete in a dog-eat-dog adult business as a teenager, Will says there is one big advantage he's discovered. "Whenever I talk to other bands and tell them how old I am, they all say the same thing," he notes. "God," they say, "I'd give anything to be your age again and know what I know now!"



eve's plum

THE OTHER HALF

Amy Gerard, vocals; Chris Hansen, guitar; Joe Engravalle, bass; Northernbdrumsdrums base: Northern NJ
Ages: 21-24

What the Spin Doctors borrow from funk, The Other Half take from jazz, and instead of Chris Barron's goofy, boyish vocals, The Other Half base their appeal on the vibrant, earth-mother warmth and stunning voice of their lead singer, Amy. Those differences pale compared to what the two bands have in common, though, and the similarity's been enough to let The Other Half climb about as high as you can on the club scene ladder without actually getting signed: They do Thursdays at Desmond's Tavern, Mondays at The Wetlands, have a huge and loyal following, and a repertoire big enough that their fans can follow them from show to show and rarely hear the same songs twice. On the night I caught their act, they did ninety minutes without breaking a sweat, and came back later for a second set.

The most important thing The Other Half shares with the Spin Doctors is that nouveau hippie/Grateful Dead vibe. They jam incessantly; I clocked one guitar solo at 6 minutes, and there were four others in the set just like it - plus a drum solo, plus a flautist who came out of the audience and jammed on a couple of numbers. Two guys in the Half have beards, and the bass player looks like he should be driving a beer truck; they're the kind of band that'd be laughed off the stage by the alternative nose-rings at Maxwell's. But I could easily see The Other Half as the opening act on next summer's H.O.R.D.E. tour.

But will they get signed? It's a hard call. Record labels don't really like to sign New York bands, and they especially don't like to sign the same band twice. Madder Rose and Eve's Plum already have their deals; will the majors want a third golden-throated sparrow and her three motley sidekicks on their roster?

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Rating The Clubs

NIGHTINGALE'S

Popularized by the Spin Doctors, who got their start there, this is one of the worst places in the city to see a band. There's no stage, the p.a. is atrocious, the drinks are overpriced (\$2.75 for a 12 oz. Coke!) and you have to stand off to the side of the band, which makes it difficult to hear. On the plus side, the club only books three or four bands a night (compared to eight at some places,) and there's a pool table. Best when it's almost empty.

UNDERWORLD

The college rathskeller from hell. Still, there's a nice-sized stage with lighting and decent sound, average priced drinks, and good sightlines. Bookings are wildly uneven and usually run 6-8 bands every night. Things usually run more or less on schedule.

SPIRAL

Intimate bar with small stage. Bookings tend to be bottom of the barrel. Drinks are slightly higher than average. Sound is pretty bad. Sightlines are okay although the place easily becomes overcrowded.

STREET LEVEL

A neighborhood bar on the corner of Ave. A and Houston Street, there's something about Street Level that makes it feel less like a club and more like someone's basement rec room. There's a small stage, bad p.a., reasonable drink prices, and lots of tables and chairs. In fact, it's probably the only club on this list that was designed for people to sit and watch the bands, which explains its odd ambience. There's very little room in front of the stage and no room to dance, yet you'll often see funk, metal, and thrash bands there. Weird.

BOND STREET CAFE

Another total dive. Bookings are wildly unpredictable but heavily loaded with metal and funk bands. The outer cafe/bar is actually okay but the backroom where the bands play is much too small. The stage is narrow but deep. The sound tends to be too loud and too bassy, but the guy who handles the bands and works the soundboard is very friendly and cooperative (when he's in a good mood.) Good sightlines, average priced drinks. Shows start late and end very late. They have all-ages hardcore/metal matinees on Saturdays from 7-10 p.m.

LION'S DEN

A nice-sized room with a good stage, decent sound, very good sightlines. Below average drink prices with frequent specials. Bookings lean heavily toward NYU frat bands, funk, and cheesy alternative-rock. They do a good job of running shows on schedule.

BROWNIE'S

A small bar with a postage-stamp sized stage, bad sound, expensive drinks. The bookings here can be surprisingly innovative and it's one of the few small clubs in the Village that books touring bands on a regular basis. Everything tends to run late.

JOHNNY JONES SHOWCASE CLUBS

Desmond's Tavern, Nevada Smith's,

These three bars are booked by Johnny Jones. Unlike most of this circuit, Jones only books two-three bands per night, and specializes in jammy Spin Doctors type bands that can stretch out and do long sets. Drinks are cheap and I've never seen anyone get proofed in any of these places, plus there's never a cover charge at the door. A lot of the bands that develop and draw at these clubs go on to play Wetlands on a regular basis.

CBGB

Open seven nights a week (Sunday and Monday are usually audition nights,) a CBGB show can range from eight local bands no one has ever heard of, to a killer bill with some of the hottest touring indie acts in the country (or the world) headlining. Things run on schedule, drinks are pretty cheap, the sound system is the best in the city. Most bills will include seven or eight bands, though, which means you usually have to sit through some crap to hear the band you came to see. The cover ranges from \$3 for audition nights to up to \$10 on weekends, depending on the headliner. Next door at CB's 313, acoustic acts and performance artists get to do their thing in an art gallery/cafe setting.

WETLANDS

Probably the hottest small club in the city right now. Bookings lean heavily toward trippy Deadhead stuff, with a lot of funk and ska. Hardcore bands get to play on Sunday matinees. Although it's a big place (with a large basement lounge,) the area in front of the stage is actually very small, making it difficult to see the band when it gets crowded. Drink prices are average. Becoming a real competitor to CBGB for hot touring bands.

TILT

A large club located in a warehouse in SoHo, Tilt's band bookings are handled by different promoters so it's difficult to characterize the shows there. Admission can be ridiculously expensive (\$10 to \$15 Sound Advice?). Very large stage, good sound. The downstairs space is used as a disco.

UNDER ACME

Not a club but a space that bands lease to promote their own shows. That usually means no advertising so you rarely know who's there unless you see a flyer or know the band. Big stage, decent p.a., lots of places to sit (a rarity) and good drink prices make this an attractive place to see a show.

ANYPLACE ON BLEECKER STREET

Avoid at all costs

CONTINENTAL DIVIDE

A weird place that has its own special scene going. Different people book different nights. This is the home of NYC's 60's garage band scene - D-Generation, Vacant Lot, Devil Dogs, Iron Prostate, Lone Wolves, Senders, the Vital Music "scum rock" bands and the city's riot grrl bands all call this place home. Nice stage, crummy sound, cheap drinks, good location, and it's almost always crowded. Added benefit: No more than three to four bands per night.

DANCETERIA/ROCKETERIA

Avoid at all costs. Obnoxious doormen will make getting in a hassle, and once you're inside, you'll be treated to a selection of the city's cheesiest metal bands. Everything about the place is overpriced and phony, although it is one of the last places in the city you can still find women in latex tigerskin slacks.

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GIRLS AGAINST BOYS

by Jim Testa

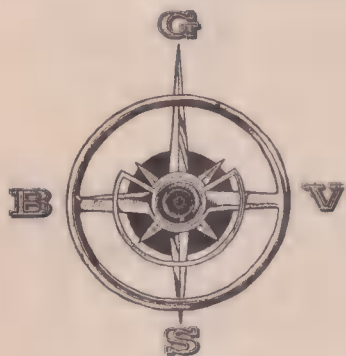
The D.C. punk scene has always reminded me of ■ big high school, full of cliques and rivalries, overbrimming with hormones and adolescent emotions. There ■ the popular kids who get good grades and never have to worry about a date on Saturday night (like Fugazi and Jawbox) and there are the nerds that nobody likes who spend each weekend alone, picking their zits and wishing they were someone else. The problem with Dischord High is that no one ever seems to graduate.

That hasn't been the case with Soulside, though. Once the teen heartthrobs of the D.C. scene, the group finally called ■ quits in 1989 and went their separate ways - out of D.C. Singer Bobby Sullivan moved to Boston, where he formed 7 League Boots and, when that group dissolved, joined Rain Like The Sound Of Trains with ex-Verbal Assault guitarist Pete Chramiec.

The other members of Soulside - Scott McCloud (guitar, vocals,) Alexis Fleisig (drums), Johnny Temple (bass,) and the band's perennial roadie and recording engineer, Eli Janney, who now plays bass, keyboards, and provides the backup "wee-ooo's" - eventually relocated to New York (Brooklyn, actually) and formed Girls Against Boys. The group recently signed to Touch & Go and released their fourth album, *Venus Luxure No. 1 Baby*.

Their name may sound confrontational, and their music certainly bristles with anger, but you won't find four friendlier, more down to earth guys in New York City. I knew they were talented, but I quickly learned they're also witty, polite, professional, and honest. I didn't ask ■ question they wouldn't answer, including a lot of gossip about Soulside that I'm sure they'd just ■ soon leave behind them.

And so, on ■ late summer afternoon, the band met me for some matzoh ball soup and cheeseburgers ■ ■ East Village diner to talk about their lives ■



D.C. alumni. The conversation begins just as I turn on my mini-tape recorder.

Scott: No comment.

Johnny: No comment.

Eli: Well, Jim, I really can't answer that right now. What we're going to do is assign that to a committee and have them study it, and then we'll get back to you.

Q: You really are from D.C., aren't you?

Eli: No, really, what we want to say (leaning into microphone) is how very, very pleased we are to be on Touch & Go Records. Cory is the greatest! No seriously, I want to say, and I think I speak for the rest of the band, that we're very, very pleased. When our single came out, we did like a mini-tour, and everywhere

we went, there were posters and pictures and articles about us in the local paper and stuff.

Q: Yeah, Touch & Go is really cool. They're the last label that still services me with vinyl.

Johnny: Oh wow, you got *Venus Luxure* on vinyl? I'd love to see that it looks like.

Scott: We just got the CD.

Q: So how did you guys wind up in New York? I can't imagine why anyone in their right mind would move here.

Johnny: How do you know we're in our right mind?

Alexis: We moved here because, if you can make it here,

you can make it anywhere, right? (laughter) No, we moved here because Scott was going to school, he was going to NYU. And I moved up here with him, to get away from D.C. I'm not sure why, just to get away from D.C. From the suffocating scene there. No, Scott wasn't going to school, I had just finished school and I had a horrible job in D.C., so I just left. Then Johnny moved up and we were in another band for a while with Mike Fellows. And, I don't know, we

Johnny: We felt kind of typecast being a Dischord-political-punk-straightedge band.

just wanted to try out New York for a while.

Scott: We didn't move here because we thought we'd do better in a band in New York. That wasn't it at all. We just wanted to live in New York. It is a pretty interesting place.

Q: Had you all grown up in D.C.?

Scott: Yeah, we were all from D.C., or from the suburbs anyway.

Johnny: And a lot of people spend their whole lives there. D.C. is a very comfortable place. And if you're going to be



SCOTT McCLOUD

Photo by Jim Testa

in music, in ■ band, it's ■ very nurturing place. The music scene there, there aren't many places that compare to it. But I guess we all felt like we wanted to try something else for a while. We always have the option of going back.

Q: Was there ■ feeling that you wanted to make ■ clean break and start over again somewhere else, because Soulside was so identified with the scene there?

Johnny: I think so. That was part of the frustration of being in Soulside. We felt kind of typecast as being ■ Dischord-political-punk-straightedge band. We were almost defensive about it. Right now, I wouldn't react the same way towards being labeled in that way, because I'm removed from it. I don't have to feel so intimidated by it. But ■ the time, it

deterrents.

Johnny: Another reason ■ started to feel really trapped in Soulside is because you start to try and live up to your audience's expectations. There were a lot of things ■ wanted to try, different styles and so forth, that ■ couldn't in Soulside because ■ thought it wouldn't live up to our fans' idea of us.

When you start ■ new band, you're wide open, you can do whatever you want.

Alexis: When we were in Soulside, everytime we played ■ show, we would feel obligated to play ■ lot of old songs that our fans liked that didn't really represent what we were about anymore. We weren't the teenagers that wrote the songs and they didn't mean anything to us anymore, but we still had to play them.

Q: I would think another big change for you guys has been that, D.C. is so supportive. You've got Positive Force and Dischord, and lots of other bands that you're friends with, and you could always count on getting good shows. Here, it's completely different, it's so dog eat dog and bands by and large don't work together, and the club scene is so different...

Alexis: That has been ■ challenge. Because D.C. is very nurturing, which is ■ great thing. Just having a lot of friends who are doing it too that you can hang out with. But here, you've very much on your own.

Scott: It's really different because, a, you really are on your own, and b, it doesn't fucking matter what you do here anyway. Nobody



Photo by Michele Taylor

GIRLS AGAINST BOYS

felt like a great pressure.

Q: I've talked about that with several other people lately. If you're a "Dischord" band, then you're ■ hardcore band. And if you're ■ "hardcore" band, then you wind up playing every show to teenagers. Not that there's anything wrong with that, but after you stop being ■ teenager yourself, I can understand why you'd want to move on and find ■ broader audience. I think most people still think of Soulside as a teenage band, whereas you've established Girls Against Boys ■ very much ■ more mature band.

Scott: I think that was a large part of Soulside breaking up. We had been in the band a really long time and we had ■ lot of songs that dated back to when we ■ just out of high school. We didn't play together for a couple of years after Soulside break up, we needed that time just to break out of that frame.

When I first came to New York, there weren't any plans for this band. It just sort of naturally happened. It wasn't like, "Oh, New York is ■ fun place to live, let's do the band up here!" It's ■ lot harder to be a band here. Practice space is really expensive. Living is more expensive. There are a lot of

cares.

Q: You've been really selective about playing here. There are a lot of places for bands to play in New York, in fact ■ lot of bands play every week ■ a different bar, but they're all pretty crappy gigs. You've pretty much avoided falling into that trap.

Johnny: Well, yeah, but there are two sides to that. We'd very much like to be playing out more than we are. We don't want to be playing every little shithole in New York. But I personally would like there to be a better balance.

Scott: Especially when you're not touring, sometimes we'll go two or three months without ■ gig. And meanwhile you're schlepping your guitar down to practice a couple times a week, paying for the rehearsal space. After a while, you just kinda go, what the hell am I doing this for?

Eli: Not that there aren't some rewards in just playing together, even if it is just practice. I don't know about you guys, but sometimes we'll just be working things out and there'll be a breakthrough, and I find that just as rewarding as playing a show.

Scott: Yeah, yeah, I remember that. (Everybody laughs) Mostly when I'm stuck in rehearsal I think about Lawrence, Kansas. (Everybody laughs)

Scott: That was the last tour we did, it was a bad one. And it started off here in New York, and I don't know. Sometimes, you know, if you don't play Brownie's and you don't play any of those places and you're here in New York, you just feel like you're not really a part of anything. Then we go on tour thinking, this is going to be great, we're going to be playing every night, playing great places. But we had a pretty crazy tour. So we get to Lawrence, Kansas, a place where Soulsides had always done pretty well, and nobody came.

Eli: We played to four people.

Scott: The first band played and even they left.

Johnny: Didn't the promoter leave too?

Scott: Yeah, it was so bad, he interrupted us mid-song and he goes, I gotta get out of here, here's your twelve bucks, and then he left.

Q: Fugazi has been pretty unique in that, right from when they started, they carried all their old fans along with them. I know here in New York, when Richie left Underdog and started Into Another, or Walter left Gorilla Biscuits and started Quicksand, their old fans didn't follow them to the new bands. Those bands

played a lot of shows to no people in the beginning. I guess you were in the same predicament. Do you think it's just that the audience didn't know it was the same people they used to support?

Scott: I know with Soulsides that was the case. There were some people who knew about Soulsides, but we didn't really stay around long enough for people to know as individuals. By the time most people heard our music, we had broken up. We didn't stay around long enough for people to care about the individuals in the band.

Alexis: Yeah, in every town we go to, there are three guys who were really into Soulsides and still come to see us. And they come up and we talk to them and stuff like that.

Johnny: Yeah, it's interesting. Soulsides seemed like it was a lot more... in retrospect, Soulsides was a lot more popular than we knew. There were towns that we would go to where we'd get a good reception, but even on the last Soulsides tour, there were shows where we played to 15 people. We never got that popular.

Q: I can remember you came to New York and played one of those infamous CBGB hardcore matinees with a bunch of skinhead bands...

Johnny: Oh God, that was so bad!

Scott: See, that was the thing, shows like that. We'd play a show like that and say, We gotta get out of this band and get into a band where we can play at night (everybody laughs)

Eli: Now we tour with Touch & Go bands, since we're on Touch & Go now, and we get to play at night all the time.

Johnny: This next tour we're going out with Tar and Jesus Lizard, and this band called Braniac.

Q: Before Touch & Go, you were on Adult Swim, which was Jeff Nelson's label... Was there a deliberate decision not to put Girls Against Boys on Dischord to break away from that D.C. identity, or was it just that you were never asked?

Eli: Well, we never really had the chance. That first record, *Eighties Vs. Nineties*, do you know the story behind that? The first side, the "Eighties" side, was really just a studio project that I had been doing with Brendan Canty. We never really expected anyone else to hear it, and then Jeff got a hold of the tape and said, hey, let me put this out! And by the time that happened, Johnny and Scott had moved to New York and we were playing with them and we had started to turn into a real band, and the demos we did then were the Nineties side. So when we started, we wouldn't have been on Dischord because it wasn't a real band yet, and then by the time we were a real band, we were living in New York. And of course, you have to be a D.C. band to be on Dischord.

Q: One thing I always thought was weird is that those early Girls Against Boys songs didn't sound anything like Soulsides, but then Bobby (Sullivan) started playing out with 7 League Boots and they did a couple of songs that sounded a lot like Soulsides. Yet he was only the singer, and I always

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assumed you guys wrote all the music.

Scott: Yeah, I guess that is weird.

Eli: Well, I don't even know if that's necessarily true. If you listen to the last Soulside record, there are elements of what we're doing now there. I don't think *Hot Bodi-Gram* sounded much like a Soulside record anyway, it was a lot closer to what we sound like now.

Alexis: What was that review we saw of us? "Going from the last much-reviled Soulside record..."

Johnny: People *hated* that record.

Q: I remember listening to *Hot Bodi-Gram* and thinking, these guys are drinking way too much coffee. That was a very nervous sounding record.

Scott: By then we were all drinking too much, but it wasn't coffee, it was wine. That was a very burnt out, hungover sounding record.

Q: Didn't you record it in Europe during your last tour?

Johnny: Yeah, at the end of the tour. That record was sort of like, Welcome to the world of intoxication. Whether it's coffee or beer...

Eli: Or *pot*!

Johnny: Yeah, or marijuana perhaps.

Alexis: It was funny because by the time we recorded that record, the band had already decided to break up. So there was this sense of, since we've broken up, we can do

whatever the fuck we want.

Let's just get in there and fuck around.

Eli: There was a certain sense of freedom at that time. And also, recording it in Holland instead of in Arlington, there was a real sense of, whatever, change there.

Scott: And from that standpoint, I would think, in my non-objective view, that it's not that different from the first (*Girls Against Boys*) record. A lot of that carried over, but

there was also a two year interval. But there was also very much the sense, in starting *Girls Against Boys*, that we could do whatever we wanted to. We're not going to be a hardcore band. We're going to have a disco song, have a song with no guitar on it. When we did *Tropic Of Scorpio*, the idea was we were gonna have songs that sounded like the Rolling Stones and Z.Z. Top...

Eli: Lynyrd Skynyrd.

Scott: ...we're weren't going to worry about what our fans wanted or whatever.

Q: And there's your singing, which isn't very punk. More like Bob Dylan.

Eli: No, Tom Waits.

Q: (to Eli) What was the big breakthrough that led to the "Wee-oo Wee-oo" song? (everybody laughs convulsively) I can never remember the title but I'm sure everybody else calls it that too.

Alexis: People come up to him on the street and start going

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"Wee-ooo, wee-ooo!"

Scott: Anytime we play that show, *everybody* after the show is going "Wee-ooo, weee-oooo."

(much laughter)

Eli: When we did that song, it was when I was just recording stuff with Brendan, and we were using a drum machine. Which really ticked off people in D.C. It was like, how dare you use a drum machine! Or, how dare you use a drum machine that doesn't sound like Big Black. So we did a bunch of songs, and we had Scott come in and sing on some of them, and we gave that tape to Amy Pickering. When it came time to record again, Brendan was playing with Fugazi by then, and Scott and I and Alexis and Johnny recorded the other three songs, the Eighties side, on that first record. But I don't really know where the "wee-ooo, wee-ooo's" came from. That was probably Circus Lupus-influenced backups. But we were definitely trying to do what people in D.C. were *not* doing at that time.

Q: I understand before Touch went Go came along that you were getting nibbles from a bunch of major labels? And you just laughed in their face and told them all no?

Eli: That was a real feeding frenzy time. I think it's calmed down by now.

Johnny: We did get some calls. Always from some A&R guy who would look just like a friend of ours. You know, he wouldn't be

wearing a suit and tie, he'd be in jeans and a Fugazi t-shirt.

Eli: The thing is, the labels all would talk about how they have this new policy of cultivating bands, they wouldn't sign

bands expecting a big hit right away and then drop them if they didn't sell. I wonder if that's really true, though?

Scott: We talked to a few labels, but we never got to a serious stage where we were actually talking about being

Alexis: These A&R guys come in and act like your friend...

Johnny: ...And then when their boss doesn't like your tape, they won't even take your calls. Your pal.

on the label.

But then over a few months, we learned how it works. Someone at the label is interested, but it's never anyone important. So they talk to you and get a tape, and bring it back to the office and play it for their boss. Then they'd bring the guy who really had the power to the next gig, and he wouldn't like you, and that'd be the end of it. But at that same gig that Atlantic didn't like you, there'd be a couple of other labels there, and they'd call you, and it'd start all over again.

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Q: It gets to be a game. I see a lot of bands getting sucked into it.

Scott: And then that's all you ever do, showcase. You never tour and you never make any records, you just try to get signed. And after a while you forget you started all this to make music.

Johnny: We were quickly disillusioned with the whole process. That's one of the reasons we were so happy when the option came up to be on Touch & Go. I just felt like, yeah, let's agree to this quickly before some kind of offer comes along that we can't refuse, like some huge sum of money. Those guys, it's so seductive, they take you out to dinner and... You can understand why bands do that.

Scott: I mean, you're doing this seven, eight years, you've never made any money, and all of a sudden, some guy comes along who's going to give you a hundred thousand dollars right now. And you're like, wow, I don't have to paint toilets anymore!

Johnny: We had one particularly bad experience with one of these labels. It was a revelation. But it became very clear that all they care about is product. You have to sell units, and if you don't sell units, you're gone.

Alexis: These (A&R) guys come in and they act like your friend, but they're really not your friend, they're just business people.

Johnny: Their whole appeal is, "I know what it's like. You're

this new wave of grunge musician, and I was there going to the shows." And then, when their boss doesn't like your tape, they won't even take your calls. Your pal. And suddenly you can't even get the guy on the phone.

Q: Everytime I put out a new issue now, I get calls from five of those guys who want me to hook them up with some band whose demo tape I reviewed.

Johnny: And the thing is, the first 15 minutes you're talking with them, all they do is try and convince you that they're *down*. That they're different, they're not like those other guys. It's like, all they want is for us to say to them, "yeah, you're *cool*, you're okay."

Scott: Or otherwise it's like dropping serious names. Just to prove they're really with it.

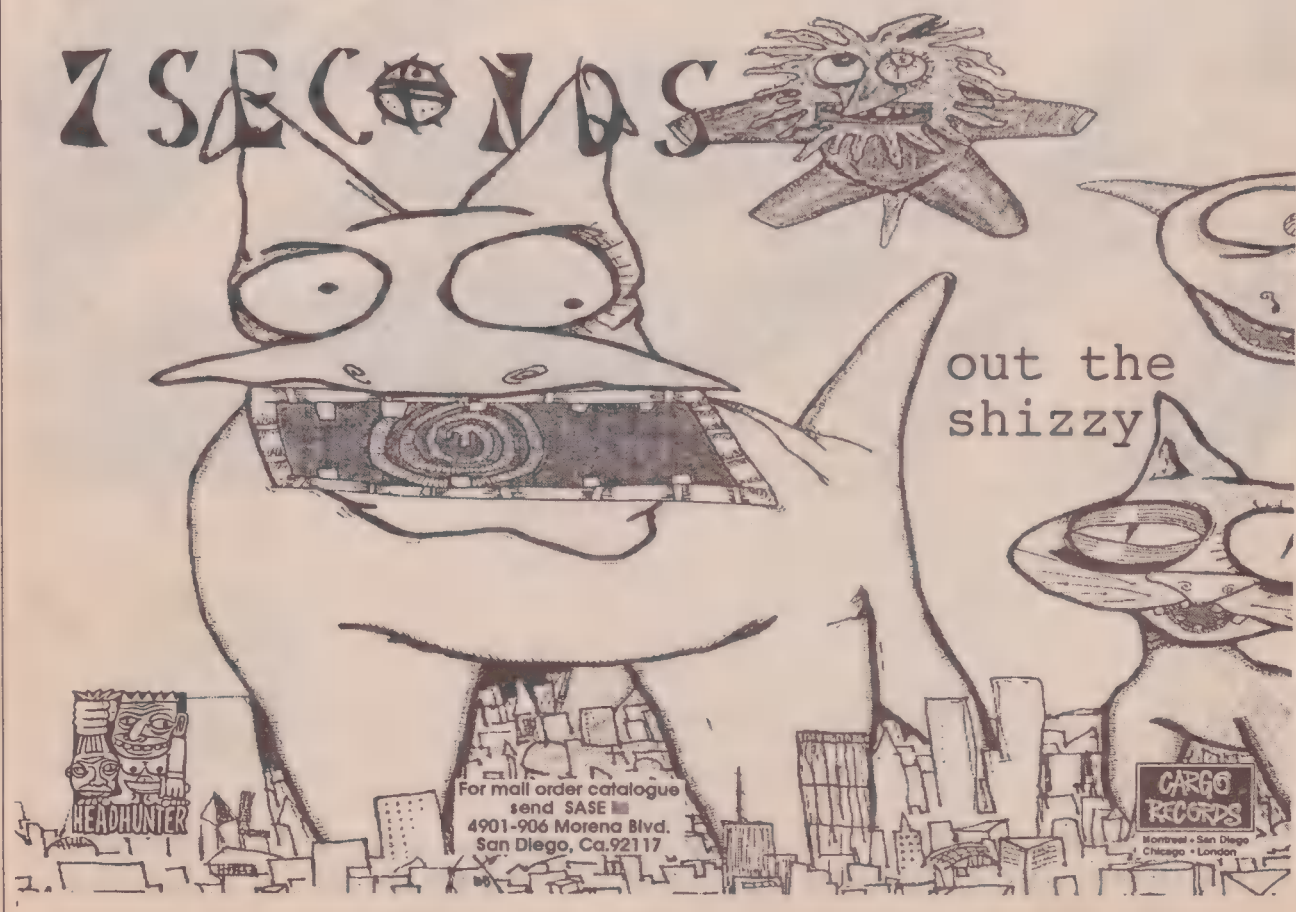
Q: So, do you guys have assigned roles within the band?

Eli: Well, Johnny's our financial advisor. Alexis is our graphic artist, and he is our booking agent. And Johnny handles our bookings as well. Scott and I are the PR men. I know how to work in the studio so I engineer our records. And Scott...

Scott: Right now I'm trying hard to realize my own potential.

Eli: And Johnny has a Master's Degree in Social Work, so he helps us out when our social skills are lacking.

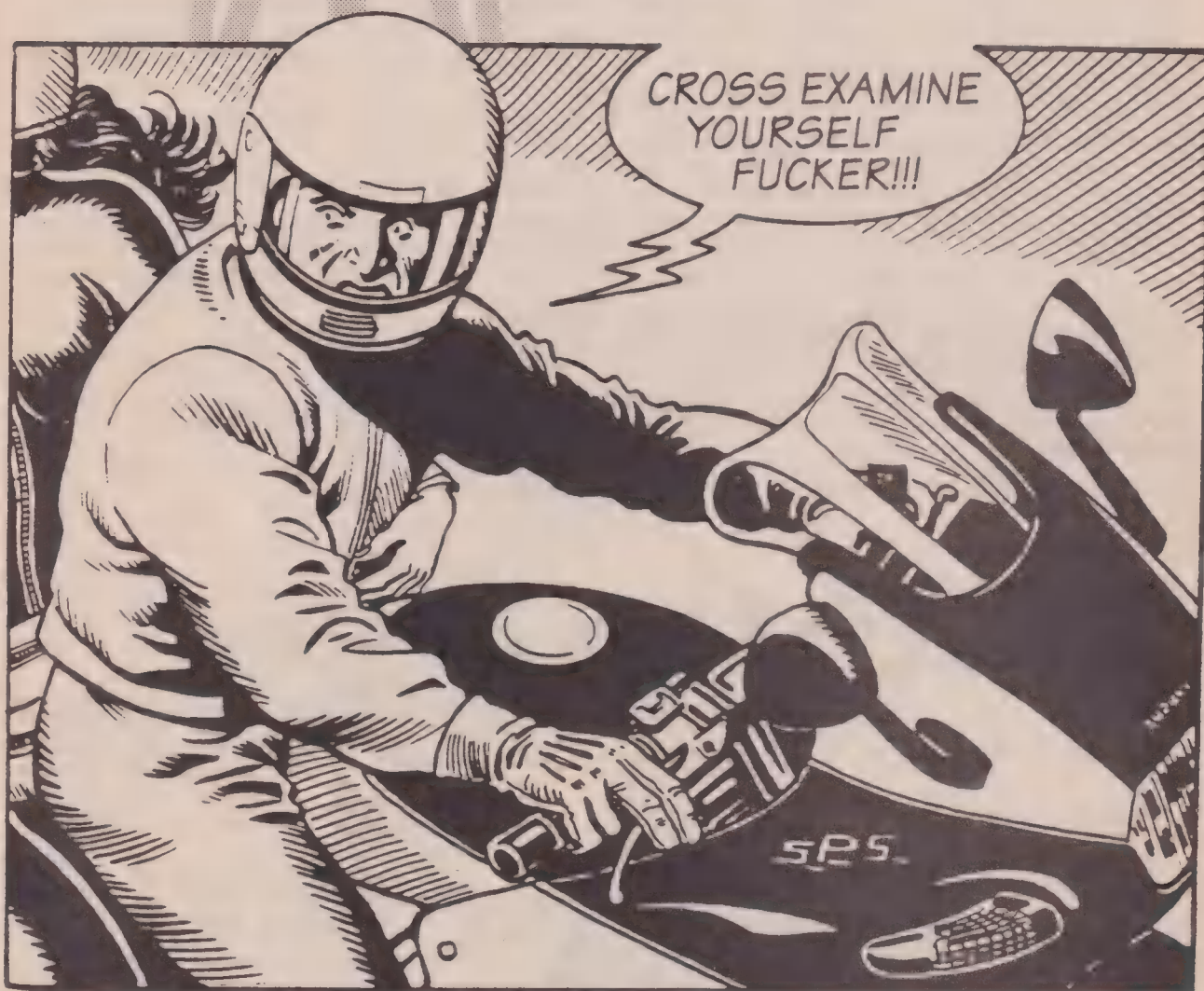
Scott: And I went to film school, so I try and make it seem like we're living in a movie.





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NUDESWIRL

by Jim Testa

Nudewirl's mix of swirling distortion, impassioned but buried vocals, and flannel-shirted style could certainly be mistaken for a good imitation of that Seattle grunge thing by the casual listener, but then the casual listener wouldn't know that these guys were doing pretty much the same thing back in the days when Kurt Cobain was still hanging out at Melvins' practices and dreaming about the day he could start his own band. Long a favorite in their native New Brunswick, Nudewirl first caught my attention about six years ago, with the release of their debut lp, *Nudewirl*.

The band consists of lean and lanky frontman Shane Green, his trippy sidekick and second guitarist Dizzy Cortright, bassist Chris Wargo and drummer Woody Newland. Like a

lot of New Brunswick bands, they've pretty much always been slackers, and although they're playing out now a lot more than they ever did before, they're still pretty laid back, seemingly content to let things happen and wait for whatever comes next.

The band's big break came when Megaforce Records, South Jersey's heavy-metal powerhouse, signed them, looking for a homegrown Nirvana of their own to promote with their in-house management company, Manic Management. It was a good idea, but things rarely work out the way you plan them. Especially if you're from New Jersey.

Nudewirl went into the studio and spent a lot of Megaforce's money recording a new album, which they also called *Nudewirl*, with some hot-shit producer. Then the band decided they didn't like it. The producer politely asked to leave, the tapes went into the garbage, and the band started over, this time producing themselves. The result - with ten new songs and "F Sharp" (formerly "Fuck Sharp") and "Sooner Or Later" repeated from the first lp - accurately captured Nudewirl's grungy sound. Unfortunately, by the time it finally came out, nobody was really interested in grunge bands anymore. Then, another break: Just when it looked like their album was going to disappear into the black hole of major label flops, Beavis & Butthead discovered the video for "F Sharp" and decided that all that garbage swirling around the screen was cool. Nudewirl had arrived.

The question is, *where* had they arrived? And what was it about these Jersey-bred misfits that made them so attractive to dysfunctional dirtheads and brain-damaged head-bangers? We caught up with lead singer/guitarist Shane at Maxwell's during the band's fall club tour and asked.

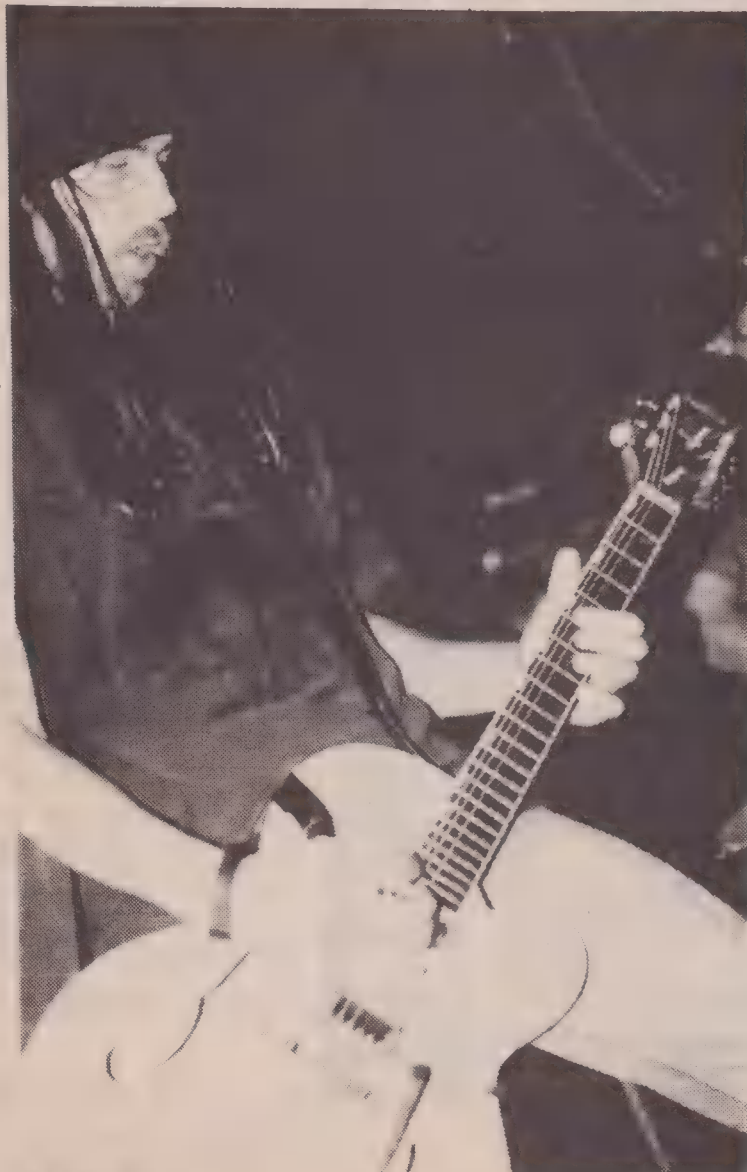
Q: So what's changed now that you're on a pretty big label and have a record out? Is success everything it's cracked up to be?



Shane: The truth is that nothing's really changed much. My life is pretty much the way it was before we got signed. The only difference is when we're touring, which has been pretty constant for the last few months. Then you're always doing the travel thing. Hectic. Tiring. But it's been a lot of fun. And it's better than sitting home and wondering ■ I oughta be out looking for a job or something.

Q: You never really got out of New Brunswick before this album came out. What's it been like touring around the country? What kind of reception have you been getting?

Shane: The first two tours we did, we were pretty much unknown. But ■ always got a pretty good reception from the crowd. But then ■ got a lot of exposure and our record got played on the radio a little, and MTV started playing the video on *Headbanger's Ball*, and things have gotten a lot better. In a lot of ways, though, it's not that different from when we were starting out. We were unknown, ■ were playing all different clubs, people didn't know who we were.



SHANE

Then we'd go back to the same club for the third or fourth time and we'd start to have a following. It's the same thing now, we're just doing it on the national level.

Q: I guess getting signed is kind of like going from high school to college. You go from being the popular senior who knows all the angles and start again ■ ■ freshman, only in ■ much bigger place.

Shane: That's it exactly.

Q: It's kind of ironic that you've been doing the same kind of music for a good five years or more and all of ■ sudden, your sound is really popular - but it's not in anyway connected to you or the place you come from. How did Nudeswirl get so grungy growing up in New Jersey?

Shane: It was kind of funny when ■ started, because we never liked to listen to a lot of music. There were very few bands that we all liked at the same time. Except maybe the Rolling Stones. There were a lot of bands making the same

kind of music we were, it ■ just a matter of time until they started getting signed.

Q: Doesn't it seem to you, though, that it's a lot harder getting signed if you're from the East Coast? It seems like the record industry doesn't really pay ■ lot of attention to what goes on here.

Shane: That's true. We ■ victims of that for a long time. So what happens is that, like ■ lot of bands around here, you just start sitting around playing for your friends and waiting for something to happen for ■ long time. The kind of music we play has been around for ■ long time. If you look around, you can find some really fucked up shit. The only difference is that fucked-up shit sells now.

Q: So what's it been like being on Megaforce?

Shane: They've been very good to us. Really supportive. I don't know what their grand design for us is yet, but so far it's been cool. They've been keeping us really busy. The thing is that before, we would only play when we had to play. Now we're out on the road and we're playing seven nights a week. We have to really dig down and find out what makes us tick. You really get into the songs playing them out that much.

Q: You just disappeared there for a while after you got signed. You weren't playing out ■ all.

Shane: Yeah, we had a lot of down time between when we got signed and the record finally came out. I think it was like a year and a half. I wish it was quicker. We were actually making ■ record before ■ got signed.

Q: I still have that first record you made. In fact, I'm hoping you guys become huge so my copy becomes really valuable.

Shane: (laughs) yeah, there aren't ■ lot of those still out there. That first record caught us in ■ really embryonic stage. We weren't even really a band yet. We just went into the studio and did it. A lot of the Nudeswirl sound was discovered while we were making that record..

Q: The second record you wound up making twice, right?

Shane: Yeah. We went in there with ■ producer and he just didn't understand what we were about. We were duped, man. We wound up with something that didn't represent us ■ all, it was just what this producer thought we should sound like. So we had to do it all over, producing it ourselves.

Q: I think the new album does ■ good job of capturing what you sound like on tape.

Shane: I think people who buy it are still surprised when they come out and see us live for the first time. Live is a lot heavier.

Q: And live, you can never hear the vocals.

Shane (laughs): Maybe, maybe not. We've never had our own soundman and it's hard getting my voice out there. We use ■ lot of echo and reverb on the guitars and it kind of closes in the music. And I'm not some heavy-metal lead singer guy with a high pitched falsetto that's gonna stand out above the music. We like it if the vocals get mixed in with the guitars.

Q: Does that affect the way you write lyrics, knowing that they're not going to be heard?

Shane: Yeah, a little. It makes it ■ little harder. Even when there's a hook in a song, ■ like to keep it pretty subliminal. The lyrics rarely jump out ■ you.

Q: Have you been keeping up with the scene back in New Brunswick?

Shane: No, I really haven't been there much lately. We've been on the road so much. I haven't heard a lot of the new bands that ■ around. But it's definitely still alive, which is great. And the shore scene has exploded. There are lots of great bands from down around Long Branch. And a lot of them are getting signed. Monster Magnet, Godspeed, Daisy Cutter, Lizard Music, McElligott's Pool... There have been so many bands from New Brunswick that I've missed. I used to hang around there really early, before there even ■ a scene. I was in New Brunswick back around 1982, 1984. Back when the bands were the Smithereens, No Matter, The Eve. It's weird because I haven't been there in so long that when I do go back, there are all these new faces I haven't seen before. But it's still cool because a

good place for bands to become bands.

Q: My only gripe is that for ■ long time, it seemed like New Brunswick bands never wanted to play anywhere else.

Shane: I know how you could get that impression but I don't know if it's necessarily true. Like with us, we tried playing this place (Maxwell's) for years. I spent a fortune on phone calls to the guy here trying to get us a show but it seemed like they never wanted to book us. Maybe it was because we were from New Brunswick, I don't know. All I know is that now that we're signed, ■ didn't have any trouble getting this show.

Q: Well, you're not just a local band anymore.

Shane: Yeah, actually that's one thing I don't like about New Brunswick now. Back when I used to hang out there, there were always national bands playing. I saw the Butthole Surfers, Mudhoney, Laughing Hyenas. Every fucking cool underground band on tour would stop there. Now you can't ■ anything but local bands in the clubs there. I know it comes and goes, and the national bands want a good guarantee. But I think it's important to ■ all kinds of bands. Even completely unknown bands from Los Angeles coming out here on their first tour, I think it's important to check them out and support bands like that. I remember when L7 came to town the first time. That was cool. And it gave the local bands ■ chance to play with them, so that when they went on tour, they'd know somebody in other cities.

Q: One more thing I wanted to ask you about, what's it like being on Beavis & Butthead?

Shane: Oh, man. I don't watch too much tv. It's been great. The exposure always helps. But I don't really focus my attention on what a couple of cartoon characters watch. They're not real so it doesn't count.

Q: What do you think about Nudeswirl would appeal to Beavis & Butthead? Your lifestyle, maybe? They ■ to respond to that grungy rock n roll life.

Shane: Maybe. We are slackers.

Photo by Michele Taylor



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Hello! At the present, almost all important ethical problems arise out of the conditions of associated life. In a stationary society, one dominated by custom, the existing social order seems to be like the order of nature itself. Any suggestion for change is regarded as "unnatural." Nevertheless, when inventions modify social conditions, when new wants & new satisfactions abound, when cultures once separated mix & influence on another, attention is forced to note the influence exerted upon individuals by collective conditions. And Welcome to Danse Assembly in written form. Catch the "audio" equivalent every Friday (10 p.m. - 3 a.m.) @ The Roxy (95 French Street, Rt 27) in New Brunswick whilst I DJ alla these same styles ([real] Alternative, [hard] Techno & [non-metal] Industrial...) Onta the records...

Armageddon Dildos - *Homicidal Dolls* (Zoth Ommog/Sire) Could quite possibly be the mutant offspring of **Die Krupps** and **Jeffrey Dahmer**!! With *Homicidal Dolls*, the Dildos have themselves the first entry in the race for Best Industrial Danse LP of '93, it's just *THAT* good! Though to the uninitiated, ...*Dolls* might sound (Nitzer) Ebb-ish, that's really just the Dildos' chant-along German accent & key sequences at work. Some other elements that work here include the most cleverly sampled gee-tar riffs this side of the Young Gods & their lyrics from Hell, all set atop a solid electro framework. With so many of the supposed "industrial" bands veering off to some metal/thrash wasteland, it's more than refreshing to see a big label like Sire give a real Industrial act the stateside exposure they deserve! Yeah, brother. *****

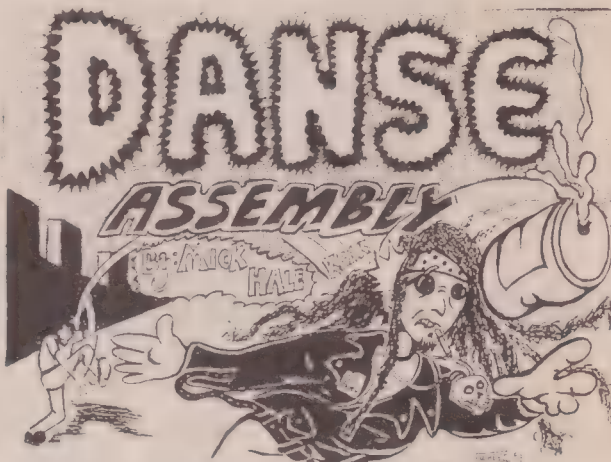
Babyland - *Dogsnatcher* (Flipside) The EP gets off to a good start with the Industro-rap of "Worst Case Scenario." It's like a Pop-O-Pies rant over a cheezy old-school beat-box plus metal hits. "Cop Out," up next, continues in a more "typical" Babyland fashion (& what I've always disliked about these guys.) They'll get a great mid-to-up-tempo groove going and then (WHAM!) it's off to some spastic H/C beat, which then breaks down again and it's all quite tiresome to follow. I dug the Talking Moose sample, however. ***



Jamiroquai

Chem Lab - *Burnout At The Hydrogen Bar* (Fifth Column) Geeze, this band just keeps getting better & better! *10 Ton Pressure*, 1990's masterpiece, was obviously just the beginning. *Hydrogen Bar* retains all their key elements: The AM-radio distort-o-vox, hard sequenced keys & a minimal use of gee-tar accents. Critter hands over a crystal clear production, this CD just sounds so damn "crisp!" Standout tracks include "Codine, Glue & You," a fast-paced romp with bouncy keyboard/vocal interplay and varied guitar samples throughout, and the slower, more melodic "Neuro-zone," which is also available on the If It Moves compilation, *Rivet Head Culture*. My only complaint with this this CD is that at 11 songs, it's over too quick! ****

Clay People *Firetribe* (Re-Constriction/Cargo) What the f*%# ??? I think there was a mixup at the manufacturing plant and the CD in this Clay People case is really Pearl Jam. Just a theory. Awful.



Clock DVA *Voice Recognition Test* (Contempo-Cargo) With *VRT*, Clock DVA take a giant leap towards dansefloor. All their Kraftwerkian key sequences intact, this is one of DVA's most straight ahead, driving drum tracks to date. Like the audio equivalent of a scifi B movie, listening to this you can just picture faces peeling off to reveal circuit-board innards! Quite the futuristic experience here, kids. *** 1/2

Engines Of Aggression *Speak* (Priority) Since Janes, Ministry, and NIN seem to be the Engines' cup of tea, I'll be having a cappuccino, thanks. While *Speak* isn't quite awful, it's more lame-ass rock & roll masquerading as something "enlightened." The press release touts this CD as a "unique, aggressive fusion of rock, industrial, alternative & psychedelia," but to me it just sounds like Poison or Motley Crue. The only song that (yes) has *EVERYTHING* going for it is "Illusion Is Real," with its kickin' drum track, distort-o radiov vox & media samples galore. This one almost sounds like a completely different band! It's too bad the whole of this release doesn't live up to this cut. *1/2

Excessive Force *Blitzkrieg CD5* (WaxTrax/TVT) Another smasher from Sascha & Co. Featuring the excellent voice of Liz Torres & the musical talents of KMFDM (basically,) *Blitz* picks up where *Conquer Your House* left off. Same house rhythms & vocals, with quick gee-tar samples make this another must for the dansefloor. 3 tracks total, can't wait for the full-length. ****

Sara DeBell *Grunge Lite* (C/Z) Ahh! what can be said

"Simple melodic basslines,

thumping acid-heart drums,

immersed in waves of guitar,

submerged breathy vocals -

majesty crush LOVE 15

their music evokes feelings of

being under water and being

able to breathe at the same

time." - Alternative Press

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about such ■ brilliant concept? Thanks to Ms. DeBell, this unbelievably lousy shit heap called "Grunge" *finally* gets the treatment it deserves! You've heard of "elevator music?" Well, this is like "Muzak for toilets!" Death to Nirvana & Pearl Jam! Too bad there's no NIN on here (then it'd be perfect!) P.S. Love the "Sheep" in flannel! *****

Head Your Mind (Various artists) (Dreamtime Recordings UK) Less of a concentric *compilation* and more of ■ *sampler* of bands who just happen to be on the ■■■■ label, *Head Your Mind* is quite enjoyable nun-the-less. Spacey, ethereal, selections alternate with harder and more dancey tracks, but there is a consistent ■■■ of electronics throughout. Acts I enjoyed most were: GGFH, with their cut ■ paste approach to the danse-muzak format, and Drug Free America, who give new meaning to the "trance" concept. Minister Of Noise, whose releases on Kk Records are always fun, offers up a slo-groove here too with "Bless This Bass." A worthy listen. ***1/2

IRRESISTABLE FORCE *Underground* (Instinct) Coming from the "chillout DJ" Mixmaster Morris, this EP from daForce is, as expected, a mellow ride on the laid back tip. While there are trance-inducing riddims at work, this is more for the post-headbanging come down. ***

JAMIROQUAI *Emergency On Planet Earth* (Columbia) Wait just ■ minute here. Who switched my new Jamiroquai CD with an old Stevie Wonder reissue? Seriously, folks, *Emergency...* plays like vintage Stevie as one begins to Wonder, what's ■ young, skinny little white punk doin' sounding sooo damn "soulful?" This could be the very first Motown record made in the UK, which is to say if the groovy-mellow-soul sound's your bag, Jamiroquai just may be for you. Oh, and it's terribly flavour-of-the-month over there, I must say. **1/2

KMFDM *A Drug Against War* (WaxTrax/TVT) With ...*Drug...War*, KMDM up the stakes ■ well as the tempo once again. Shash & En Esch must surely be workaholics by now. This is nothing you've never heard before, but from KMFDM even the "Jesus Built My Racecar" thrash beats & geeters sound pretty darn ok. A sort of "Godlike" riff sped up to 78 w/ typical choking-on-wienerwurst vocals make this another good show for these guys. ***1/2

NOSFERATU *Rise* (Cleopatra) Off to a sickly-sweet, chillingly goffick start with "The Gathering," Nosferatu combine all the right "Gloom-isms" (if you will.) It would be too easy to compare this group to the Sisters Of Mercy, so I won't (oh, darn, did I just?) Although it's not ■ complete rip, at times it's just all-to-easy to picture Andrew Eldridge at the mic. Moments of *Rise* go way higher than the Sisters new one, which is to infer ■ lot. And make this a must-own for any Huessey-era Sisters fan. Oh, and did I mention that Nosferatu sound an awful lot like Sisters Of... *****

PSYKOSONIK *Silicon Jesus* (Waxtrax/TVT) The press release calls this WaxTrax' most "crossover" material yet. Well, if that's the case, let's have *some*

more!! Thanks. What ■ great song, this. It's rare that one track can hold your interest over so many different mixes/applications, yet "Silicone Jesus" does. I'm looking forward bigtime to Psykosonik's album, due shortly. Cuz if it's as hook-happy as this, while still retaining an "alternative" edge, it's gonna be *HUGE!* Go buy this single now! *****

Treponem Pal *Excess & Overdrive* (Roadrunner) Desperately trying to sound like the Young Gods, these Frenchmen are no Pal o'mine. "Out Of Reach" is ■ weak NIN knockoff, while "Pushing You Too Far" apes the Gods' "Skinflowers," and things don't ever get much better. This whole affair has such ■ HardRock feel about it, maybe they should've titled it *Wretched Excess & Overdrive*. Quite bland, really. ■

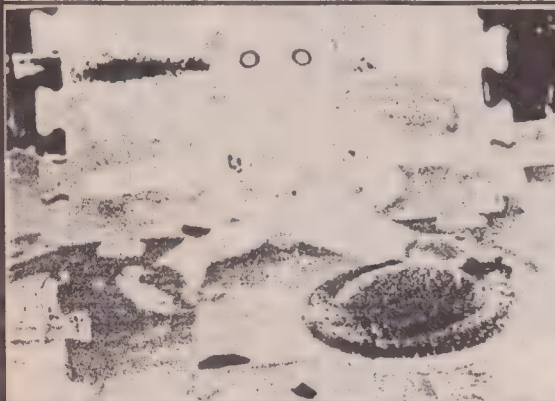
16 Volt *Wisdom* (Re-Constriction/Cargo) Entirely similar to labelmates Diatribe, Portland's 16 Volt kick out the gee-tar jams, with subtle "torture-tech" trappings. This band's keyboard & drum sequences sure ■■ groovy, although at times completely obscured by their metal leanings. Eric Powell's vocals bounce between breathy whispers and throaty, melodic screeches and this serves ■ 16 Volt's most distinguishing characteristic. If you liked the last Schnitt Acht, this might be for you. **

Kickin' Mental Detergent, Vol. 2 (Instinct) *Atom Heart* (Instinct) And now for the Techno set. These two comps, in their respective styles, are surely the finest hour for electro-groove yet! *Kickin'*

explores the break-beat generation to its fullest, w/ killer tracks from the likes of TwinBass, Wishdøkta, ZeroZero, and RuffRider, whose "You & Me" cut&paste drum track works all too well, funk-u very much. If you buy only one techno comp ever, let this be it! *Atom Heart* on the other hand, goes in for more of that Euro-Berlitz trancy thang. And quite ■ thumping listen at that. Most tracks authored by Heart, they're all top quality, especially the low-end groove of "084" by Urban Primitivism, or the skizzo Industra soundz of Datacide. If you're one of the leatherclad dozens who've been avoiding the more "house" aspects of techno, here's your chance to jump in and enjoy. ****

ALSO: **X Marks The Pedwalk**'s new one on Cleopatra is a bit too slow & gloomy for the dansefloor, but just fine at home burning candles... **East 17**'s cover of the Pet Shop Boys' "West End Girls" is sure funny e-nuff, but why bother doing ■ track *exactly* like the original? It comes off sounding like ■ NAMBLA wedding band... **Orbital 2** (Frrr) continues to wave this UK duo's fine trancy-tribal-techno sound, with two versions of "Lush" and another remix of "Halcyon"... On **Thrill Kill Kult**'s *13 Above* (Interscope), the friendly midwestern Satanists prove that they really are an Industro-Techno Sergio Mendes & Brazil 66!... **Cypress Hill** ■■ back with even more "Hits From the Bong" with *Black Sunday* (Ruffhouse/Columbia), kinda ■ one-trick pony, these guys sound hippy(hoppy) anyways... **Moby**'s *Ambient* is just that, while "Move" is ■ far better & faster affair (ala "Go")...And that'll just about do it for this time. Please continue to send any remotely danseable/etc. produkt to us directly at Danse Assembly Productions, 126 Montgomery St #3F, Highland Park NJ 08904.

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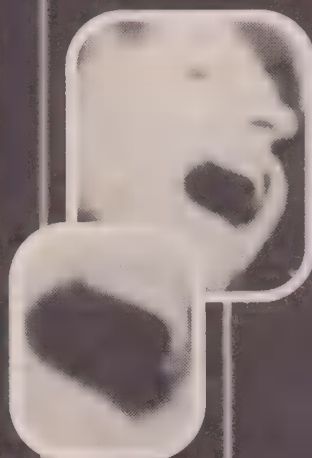
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LIVE REVIEWS

Because of the lateness of this issue, I threw out a lot of the older live reviews. If you would like to read "Diary Of A Rock Critic" in its entirety, just send a self-addressed stamped envelope and I'll send you the whole nine yards. - Jim Testa

Thursday, August 5

This is why I hate New York. This band from Ohio called The **Underworld** sent me their demo. I loved it. Total power-pop, with that really cool Real Kids/Undertones energy that you can't fake. So then I get a postcard; they're playing the Underworld tonight. Okay, I'm there. For those of you unfamiliar with the Underworld (formerly The Pool Bar, formerly R.T. Fireflies), it's this basement dump on Bleecker and Broadway where they book eight bands a night, every night of the week. And of course, the genius who books the joint has the Unknown go on last, after all the local bands with some sort of draw have left and gone home. So I wind up standing alongside the band's four friends at 1:30 a.m. watching the coolest band I've seen in six months play to an empty room and a bored soundman. At least the band had a good attitude, they played a killer set and only stopped when told they had to (the soundman wanted to get to bed.) If these guys ever come to your town, PLEASE go see them. And check out the demo reviews in this issue and write for a copy of their tape.

Friday, August 6

Punk rock doubleheader. I start at the abysmal Bond Street Cafe, the shittiest venue in NYC. It's a Long Island Mosh Matinee, although it starts a bit late since no one shows up to open the doors until well after the show was scheduled to start.

Assholes. **Garden Variety** do their usual Jawbreaker Meets Husker Du thing, but the audience is largely composed of shaved heads and scowling faces who don't like anything that doesn't sound like Agnostic Front. I miss the next band because I'm interviewing Garden Variety. **Mind Over** are up next and rock the joint, throwing in a few funny bits (like the theme from Cheers) just to throw the neanderthal mosh kids off a little. **Bad Trip** follow, and while they played a short set because everything ran so late, they kick major butt, sounding better than ever with Artie Shepherd on guitar. These guys just about perfectly bridge the gap between old school NY thrash and school catchy popcore. How do they do that? Catchy power chords? I dunno, but it works.

Sunday, August 8

I rarely go to City Gardens. Even though they have some good shows there, it's a long way for me and I'm always dependent on someone giving me a ride. Today, I met Dave Urbano in New Brunswick and he shuttled down to Trenton to see the CD

release party for the **Bouncing Souls**.

We were greeted by a long line that was slowly snaking its way around the building and into the only open door. When I finally got inside, we discovered what the delay was -- a security check that made Alcatraz seem like a Motel 6 in comparison. We had to empty our pockets, then we were buzzed with a metal detector, then vigorously frisked, then had our pockets inspected, then my knapsack searched. The CroMagnon bouncer at the door even took away my 1 inch WRSU commemorative pen knife (which didn't open envelopes, it was so dull) on the grounds that they "didn't allow no knives inside." I protested that it was hardly a knife at all and besides, I was hardly a juvenile delinquent, but to no avail. Since I had already missed most of the first band, I didn't want to go back to the car and then wait in line another fifteen minutes to get in again, so I gave him the knife, on the proviso that I could get it back at the end of the show. Of course he wasn't there at the end of the show. **Note: Randy Ellis:** You may get away with this shit when you're just pushing around teenagers, but I have news for you: *Nobody suspended the Constitution or declared martial law just so you can save a couple of kousy bucks on your liability insurance.*

Too bad the security put me in such a shitty mood because it was a great show. The place was packed, and the crowd went crazy dancing (especially during the Souls' set) but there weren't any fights or problems. (I guess that's because Attila The Doorman made everyone check their knives at the door, huh?) We missed Weston but Lifetime were pretty good, energetic and aggressive hardcore. The lead singer has a high, squeaky

voice that gets a little annoying though. Dave took some great photos but the lab lost his film when he sent them to get developed. This day was cursed!

I owe a big apology to the Bouncing Souls, first for always dismissing them before as Red Hot Chili Peppers wannabes and secondly for a dumb newspaper column I wrote. These guys put on a great show and their sound isn't just dumb white-funk anymore, it's fun punk that has a lot of different styles, from hardcore to ska. Don't miss them if you get a chance to catch them live.

Wednesday, August 11

Major moshathon tonight: **Quicksand**, **White Zombie** and **Anthrax** at Roseland. Quicksand gallantly ignored the heckling from the Anthrax lunkheads but what was Walter doing without a guitar? There he was hopping around on stage with the mike in his hand trying to psyche the crowd like he was Roger Miret or something. And you know what? He's not very good at it. He's good at playing the guitar; in fact, I thought the whole point of Quicksand was all those cool dual-guitar dynamics. With just one guitar, all you get is Tom Capone playing chords; Quicksand is half the band with Walter on just vocals. This is like another case of a band going away from their strengths in order to reach a bigger audience (on whose advice, I wonder? A&R man? management?) and the sad part about that is, it never works.

Bummed as I was about Quicksand, I was totally unprepared for the reception that White Zombie got. When did these mooks get so popular? The place went fucking nuts! I mean yelling, screaming, waving fists



CHOCOLATE USA made an impressive NY debut at CBGB the day before the **White Zombie** Seminar began in July.



Photo by Shawn Scallen

in the air, jumping up and down. And not just the front of the crowd by the stage, but everybody in Roseland! Whoa! Is it what being on Beavis And Butthead does for your career? You should have seen the exodus when the Zombies finished, probably a quarter of the crowd left, and they kept right on trickling out through Anthrax' boring, soundalike. Totally anticlimactic after White Zombie, dude, or as Beavis would say, sucks.

Tuesday, September 15

This outing more or less research for the downtown bands piece in this issue, a chance to a couple of new groups and check out the new management at the Lion's Den. First up was One Groovy Coconut, four really homely guys who turned that

One Groovy Coconut, four really homely guys who turned that ostensible liability into an asset, with a set of raucous, anything-goes party rock. All their songs were catchy and well played, and it was nice seeing a band that didn't take itself so serious just unwind and have some fun on stage. They just played too long. One wacky tv-show theme cover would have been fine; I didn't really need to hear three.

Hunk also had an obvious sense of humor, although with a name like that you'd think they'd either try to act studly, or play up the fact that they aren't. Actually, they're just sort of average looking guys with bent edge songs. The best way to describe them would be "Beatlesque," if the Beatles had never written anything except "Mean Mr. Mustard" and "She Came In Through The Bathroom Window."

Next up were **Surreal**, who you can get to know elsewhere in this issue. I have to say that these guys sort of messed up my thesis that bands don't network and work together anymore; they're tight with several other bands in the room and obviously trying to put a little humanity back into the eight-bands-a-night rat race. Surreal played the mellowest I've ever heard from them, almost all mid-tempo ballads and easy listening melodies, although they did some things up for the song (and got an enthusiastic response from a lot of other musicians in the house, always a tough crowd.)

Sometime around 1:30 (that's a.m., folks, on Tuesday night,) **Track 1AB**, who gig around town quite a bit, finally got on stage. They're very much in the post-Spin Doctors category; every song has that light funk groove thing going. Track 1AB put a little different spin on it,



Photo by Jim Testa

though, by using ■ drummer and a percussionist, ■ singer/guitarist, and bass. Lots of well-arranged vocal harmonies fill out their sound as well, and the songs are all tightly crafted, melodic, and memorable. A really talented band with a lot of potential.

Friday, November 11

They should have called this the Beavis & Butthead Tour - ■ **Zombie**, **Chemlab**, and **Nudeswirl** at Roseland - since both White Zombie and Nudeswirl enjoyed ■ surge in popularity after MTV's resident cretins started airing their videos. One thing this show proved conclusively, as far as I'm concerned, is that Beavis & Butthead is not, ■ some critics allege, a parody, but a documentary. It was really scary - 3000 slack-jawed teens in heavy-metal t-shirts with bandanas or baseball caps on their noggins slamming their noise-damaged brains out.

Nudeswirl, unfortunately, suffered the usual fate of opening bands, with shitty sound and no lights to speak of. Although I've ■ these guys a lot over the past five or six years, this ■ the first time I'd seen them in anyplace bigger than CBGB. This seemed to carry off the stage presence thing all right but the sound doomed them - vocals too high, guitars too low. If you're not totally enveloped by a claustrophonic wave of distortion, and feedback it's just not Nudeswirl. (I've noticed that Helmet's effectiveness suffers similarly in large venues.) Chemlab ■ boring industrial wannabes with soundlike heavy metal songs, gussied up with dire-sounding samples. Their frontman ■ obnoxious but ■ least he looked like he belonged in a band; the bassist and guitarist, with their short hair and Chemlab t-shirts, looked like biology majors at Rutgers. White Zombie were in their glory ■ headliners, with ■ huge scary backdrop and all those cheeseey 70's arena-rock effects that Kiss used to ■ - smoke bombs and strobe lights up the wazoo. As Beavis and Butthead would say, heh heh, they're cool. But then, they ■ cool when they were doing the same shit at CBGB in front of ■ hundred people three years ago. Now they've just got bigger toys to play with. And ■ much bigger audience to watch.



(Opposite page:) Chicago's Gauge brought their ■ punk to ABC ■ Rio ■ summer, while Buzzo- ■ provided a ■ merizingly bloody spec- ■ at Tilt for the CMJ convention.

(This page:) Deanna Bailey's ■ caught Madball at a ■ hardcore matinee (top.) ■ Sorrondeguy of Chicago's Los Crudos provided a blistering ■ of political punk at ABC ■ Rio, ■ letting Esneider and Amanda of Huasipungo (who ■ turned in ■ great set of bi-lingual agit-punk ■ day) in ■ the act.



Photo by Shawn Scallen

by Dave Urbano

LIVE REVIEWS

AN OK JIFFY BOY MUSIC FEST BY AN OK GUY

The Indie 500 turned out to be a good idea. It got many a band from all over to play together and on the bill for a very humid 4th Of July weekend in Vincentown, NJ. It wasn't just another silly car race. I hope they do it again next year with a little more musical variety, because certain bands blurred right into the next. But Brandon Stosuy (of White Bread Zine and Jiffy Boy Records) and his friend Mark were well organized. They overbooked by a few bands, but otherwise the show was well run, with really nice T shirts you could get and a consignment table for the bands' merchandise. The real purpose of this show was to raise dough for their new label, Jiffy Boy Records. They're going to put out some 7inches, including a split EP by Poole and the Barnabys, a Pussy Galore tribute 7 inch by Sugarshock, and a CD compilation. As it turned out, the show raised more than enough to get Jiffy Boy off the ground and in the record business.

On the first day of the event, by the time I got there I had just missed Transyliva. This was their first show in 5 months with their new drummer, Long John. I had also missed Spent from Jersey City, who had played earlier in the day, although Jeff from Power Bunny 4X4 zine said they were really good.

At first glance, this indie rock festival looked like someone's backyard. The pool was roped off for occasional drownings. Some two-piece band went on after Transyliva, with drums and guitars sounding like J Mascis without the overbearing power of cranked-up Marshalls. Sorry, I forgot their name. The drummer from this duo also played bass and guitar in Poole. They were okay and were actually starting to grow on me, when suddenly they hit some kind of lo-fi climax and it began to rain fireworks from behind the stage. I was clapping my hands and howling. Pyrotechnics! What a show! Yah hoo! Abruptly the music stopped with an announcement by one of the guys in charge that it was not cool and the "fireworks" were not allowed, and he also asked everyone to stop drinking. (and this and that, bad bad bad...) I guess they had some sign I had missed. Later, after a bottle of wine and a few beers amongst my friends, it became clear that the No Alcohol rule disappeared when the sun went down and the moon came up. It was all pretty low key anyway and nobody got rowdy or out of control.

Finally, after some debate between hecklers and Jiffy Boy, the Swirlies went on. They played for about 20 minutes or so, they had this whole Sonic Youth thing with big bass stuff going on. The guitarist, Shana, had a cool Kiss belt buckle and I hear one of the Jiffy Boys has a crush on her. The Swirlies put on a very enjoyable short set, as Shana exclaimed, "Whatever happened to Kiss?" The drummer sounded like he was playing a rubber band drum set, kind of on the weak side. However, the rest of the band's power made up for it.

DAY 2

My band, Mr. Thumb, got there the next day and went on about 1:30 p.m., being second on that day's lineup after Cradle from Upstate NY. They were upset they had to go on first. We only got to play four songs against everyone else's 30 minute sets, helping the Jiffy Boys get those monitors cranking and waiting for the Porta Bobs to be emptied. What a heck of a lot of noise *merde* makes when being vacuumed out of those things! The Porta Bob dude really dug us and offered Jiffy Boy a deal for next year on four Porta Bobs, all thanks to Mr. Thumb.

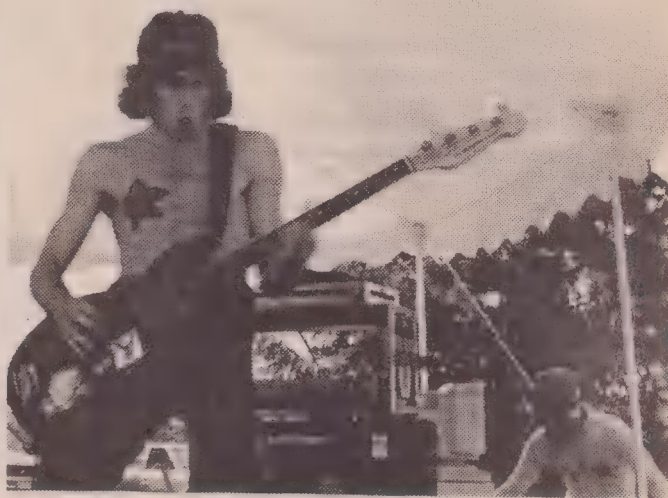
For the most part, the remaining bands played the same vein of music except for New Brunswick's own Remote Control Yeti, who had painted their faces and bodies for the 4th Of July celebration. Their sound was like a mix of the Buttholes, Mr. Bungle, and Kool Mo Dee. Grit, another duo, followed shortly after. They're also from New Brunswick and seemed to have fun doing their jangly guitar stuff. They have a demo out.

Small Factory played later and did a happy/mello acoustic/electric Feelies type of set, that ranged from loud distortion to really soft. It got so quiet at one point



MR. THUMB

during their set that when I farted, people turned around. I still liked them, even if they never quite got the momentum going that the Feelies used to. Versus came on with a little more upbeat soft-to-loud transitional music that seemed pretty cool. I thought they wrote ~~some~~ good songs. This ~~was~~ my first ~~time~~ of most of these bands live so all my impressions ~~were~~ a little sketchy, but there was a certain sameness - after a while, I thought the same drummer was playing in every band, but don't let me dress you in the morning. Monsterland from Connecticut came on after Versus and played well. They have one CD out on Spinart and a new one on Seed. The guitar player had a cool Jaguar guitar. I talked to him briefly and he said Monsterland has been able to put out "a lot of recordings without any effort." I ~~wish~~ I ~~was~~ that lucky! I liked them the ~~most~~ out of the galaxy of "smart pop" bands at ~~the~~ show, they seemed a little ~~more~~ complex and grittier. I split before Envelope (who ~~are~~ Matador) and the Push Daisies (a new group from New Brunswick, with the charming Meg on vocals) played. My ears ~~were~~ getting tired and I don't know, but ~~it~~ seemed ~~as if~~ many of these bands do not translate well to a bigger stage. Check them ~~out~~ at your local club, though. For ~~more~~ information on Jiffy Boy Records, White Bread fanzine, or ~~next~~ year's Indie 500, write ~~me~~ Brandon Stosuy, ~~PO~~ 4601, PO Box 5063, New Brunswick ~~NJ~~ 08903.



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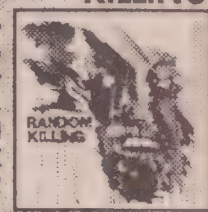
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CMJ Music Marathon - November 3-6

I have to hand it to CMJ. Year after year, they come up with a better lineup of bands than the prestigious New Music Seminar. I'm not sure what makes CMJ so much more fun, although I suspect it has a lot to do with the audience. Most of the attendees at the CMJ fest are college-radio kids from all across the country. They aren't jaded and they're thrilled to be in NY, and for the most part, they care **more** about music than about the music business.

Wednesday Nov. 3

It's always a tossup whether to hit the big shows and see the popular bands that you know you'll like, or shop around at the smaller clubs and check out bands you've never seen before. Tonight, since I was with our ace photographer Shawn Scallan, we decided for the big show at Irving Plaza.

Brainiac, from Dayton, OH, had tons of energy, even if their jazzy, post-hardcore noise-rock did sound an awful lot like Nation of Ulysses. Girls Against Boys were in especially good form, with Eli Janney going totally beserk behind his keyboards and singer Scott McCloud sounding extra sinister with his growly industrial vocals. But where was the "whee-ooo" song? (See interview in this issue) Poster Children, with yet *another* new drummer (who do they think they are, Spinal Tap?) also sounded great, giving the crowd a taste of new material mixed in with rocking tunes from their earlier album, including a great version of "If You See Kay." Yeah, a lot of their songs sound the same, but it's not the melodies with this bunch, it's the groove. Jawbox sounded great too, although equipment problems threw them a little off their stride. They were decked out in CMJ finery - Bill and Jay in flashy jackets, Kim in a prom dress - a nice self-deprecating touch given the razzing they've gotten over leaving Dischord for a major label.

Thursday, November 4

This was my first visit to the Grand since it had reopened (having formerly been the Cat Club.) They did a nice job remodeling the place, moving the stage where it belonged and opening up the space. I wanted to check out Black Happy, an 8-piece funk/ska/rock combo from Idaho that I had met (but not seen) at SXSW last Spring. They were great, although it was ridiculous to see a band that had driven all the way from Idaho get a 20 minute set. Next up were Eat from London, a boring shoegazer combo who apparently though they could fool people into thinking they were cool by dressing like Pearl Jam.

A quick cab ride downtown got me to Wetlands just in time for Midway Still, a British hardcore band. A little punkier live than on record, they combined the catchy punk qualities of the Senseless Things with the graceful, flowing rhythms of NJ's Shades Apart.

From the sublime to the ridiculously loud, it was a quick walk uptown to Tilt to see Godspeed, the South Jersey noisecore quartet who are supposedly signed to Atlantic. These guys have a great live reputation and more than lived up to it, with a bludgeoning intensity and a charismatic lead singer who looked (and moved) like a young Perry Farrell. There's a lot of post-Helmet bands that play this sort of loud, angry stuff, but Godspeed seem to be just a little louder, a little angrier, and a little more emphatic than the

rest. And yet, with all that, their performance paled compared to the maniacal Satanic display that Buzzoven put on after them. These drunken white-trash mutants seem to be hellbent on making a name for themselves the next G.G. Allin... With music that's simultaneously deafeningly loud and aggressive and yet hypnotically catchy, their singer punishes both the stage and anything on it as wekk himself with merciless violence. Mike stands crash, beer bottles break, and this sick twisted little fucker rolls around in the broken glass, beer, and filth until he emerges a bloodied psychotic mess. It was simultaneously disgusting and mesmerizing. I got so wrapped up in the performance I forgot to take pictures.

Friday, November 5

I had wanted to check out Craw, a Cleveland combo who had sent me several 7 inches, and found them at the Underworld, that dank little pit on Bleecker Street. Their psychotrash sounded like a more restrained version of Buzzoven's primal yowling, with a little more rhythmic diversity - lots of stop-start arrangements. But once Craw was finished, I hightailed it to Hoboken to see the one band I was really looking forward to, England's Jacob's Mouse.



Red Footed Genius

Red Footed Genius were about midway through their set when I got to Maxwell's, playing their big CMJ showcase gig to three teenagers and the soundman. I hate when that happens. Their record is a little on the dull side, since all their songs are mid tempo ballads, but live, the drummer's intensity picks up the slack and the emotional depth of the songs comes across much better, in the manner of, say, American Music Club.

Magically, the club filled up ■ Jacob's Mouse took the stage and started wailing away. They're another British hardcore band, a trio with all the vocals handled by the drummer. That lets the guitarist and bassist flail away like madmen, tossing their long hair like crazy on every riff and working up a huge sweat as they bounce from one ragged riff to the next. Based on their first album, I was expecting some jangly popcore but these guys were much harder edged, with shouted vocals over throbbing basslines and scratching guitar leads that ripped at your ears. Much to my chagrin, I ran out of film just as they started playing! Hope they come back soon!

Saturday, November 6

You might remember my rave review of Everclear, a Portland grunge trio, from last issue. They showed up at Continental Divide and proved just as entrancingly catchy and energetic as I remembered. They were followed by Alcohol Funnycar, whose melodic pop/punk pushed the same buttons as Midway Still a few nights earlier. The night ended disappointingly ■ Nightingales (a shithole of a place to see bands, by the way) with Roach Factory, a bad metal/punk band from Kansas who lack any of the finesse or originality of their neighbors Season To Risk and Paw. All in all, not a bad couple of nights out on the town.



Photo by Jim Testa

JACOB'S MOUSE

*Wot & Matt's first LP
 since Operation Ivy's Energy*

EVERCLEAR RECORDS 6201 STREET, SEASIDE, CA 90028

I Frayed At The Edges has returned once again. Things have been really busy here since last time. I recently returned from a short vacation to find many new releases/prereleases waiting for me. I have tried to include as many of them as possible as well as some more obscure releases that you may want to check out. Anyway, enjoy perusing the reviews and as always my contact address is: Hayley Greif, PO Box 215, Hightstown, NJ 08520.

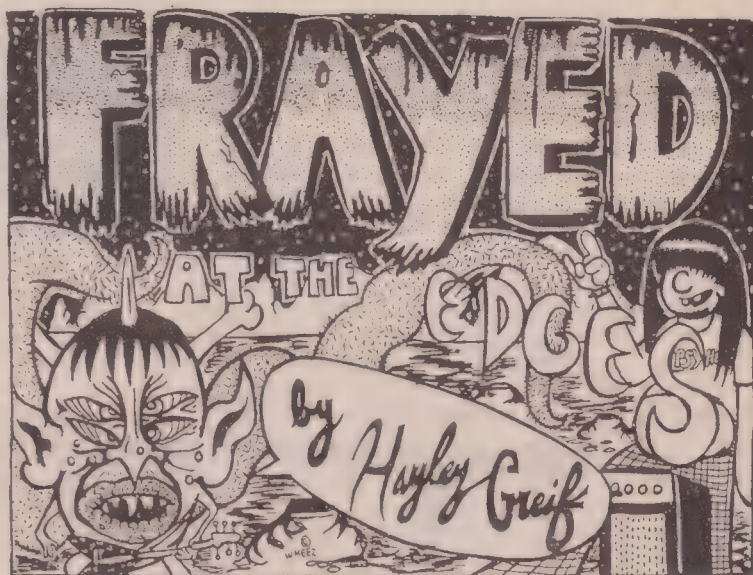
One of my favorite bands, PARADISE LOST, has a new release coming out soon on Metal Blade Records. Entitled Icon, this is the band's fourth full length release and is my favorite of '93. Icon contains 13 songs including the instrumental "Deus Misereatur," which ends Side 2. The band has progressed since the release of their last efforts, Shades of God and the "As I Die" EP. On this release, the music is in the vein of Shades of God and incorporates the feel of their second release, Gothic. Well. Vocalist Nick Holmes is not as gruff in his singing style. The result is a moody yet uplifting release that shines, with the production once again being handled by Simon Effmeyer. Every song is a masterpiece of its own but there are a few that stand out for me, including "Rememberance," "Forging Sympathy," "Widow," and "Christendom".

ANNIHILATOR, with a new supporting cast, has recently issued their third Roadrunner release, Set The World On Fire. This release marks a new direction for the band with a new singer, Aaron Randall and a distribution deal through Epic Records. Set The World On Fire shows a change in songwriter/guitarist Jeff Waters's outlook as he had much to deal with in the last couple of years since the release of Never, Neverland. The attention of his songwriting has gone from concentrating on riffs to writing songs as a whole entity. The 10 song CD takes the listener on a journey from the last song "Braindance," which is a throwback to the first two releases, to the beautifully written ballad "Phoenix Rising," which talks about the good that can come from someone close dying. The other songs like "Snake In The Grass" and "Knight Jumps Queen" are heavy yet accessible, more straight ahead than intricate. Annihilator has returned and they are tighter and stronger, emotionally and musically, than ever before. It's good to see that the band is forging ahead and taking the changes they've experienced in stride. Set The World On Fire is an appropriately named release.

Out of Fresh Meadows, New York, comes a new power metal band called LEGION. This three piece band consists of Chris Tramontina on guitar, Anthony Migliorelli on drums and Paul Vario on bass and vocals and they have a four song demo available entitled Lullaby. The four songs on the demo are "Gone Forever," "Past Imperfect," "The Unbelievable Truth" and the title track. The band reminds me of Manowar both musically and vocally around the time of Fighting The World. Legion has talented musicians and that can be seen throughout the demo, especially on the ballad "Past Imperfect." "Lullaby" is an enjoyable and accessible demo that makes me want to hear what else the band may come up with in the future. If you want to check out the demo or find out more about the band, you could try to

find them playing at a local club or write: Nomad Productions, 69-22 Fresh Meadow Lane, Fresh Meadows, NY 11365

England's Peaceville Records has a great roster of bands that challenge the boundaries of death metal. One such group is the five piece Liverpool band ANATHEMA, who on their debut full-length CD, take the listener on a journey that combines the doom/death metal sound with orchestration and female vocals. Serenades is a debut that is innovative and appealing and definitely one of my favorite releases. The tracks (including the CD bonus "Dreaming The Romance") are emotional and well-written, drawing the listener in through the heaviness of the music and the



words. The songs include "Lovelorn Rhapsody," "Sleepless," "Where Shadows Dance," and the beautiful "J'ai Fait une Promesse" (loosely translated to be "I Have Made A Promise"), on which guest vocalist Ruth sings. Throughout the whole disc I felt as if the band was trying to serenade me through my speakers and the feelings I had were worth the experience. Anathema has given the metal world an exciting and thoroughly enjoyable release, and since this is their debut, there is a lot more great music to come from the band. This is one import that is worth looking for in import stores here or you can write directly to Peaceville at: PO Box 17, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire, WF12 8AA, England.

North Jersey is the home of the band Synergy who have a four song demo tape called "Awaiting The Day." The band consists of Don Grilli on bass/backing vox, Jeff Kittren on guitar, Steve Dionisio on vocals, and Charlie Holman on percussion/backing vox. Synergy is an interesting hard rock band that combine different styles. There is a funk/alternative influence with high pitch vocals at parts but Dionisio has a good range as he is able to go from high to low without difficulty. I can't really compare the band to anyone because they have a unique sound. The four songs on the demo are "No Man's Land," "Dirge," the title track, and "Inyor Spine." All of the songs are good but my

favorites are "No Man's Land" and the title track. Synergy is ■ band I've been wanting to hear for some time. I'm glad I did because they are a band that takes different types of music and creates their own. To get in touch with the band, either ■■■ them live or call or write to: Synergy, PO Box 94, Haskell, NJ 07420, (201)839-8091.

Century Media Records has been expanding out of the deathmetal realm and opening its ■■■■ to new bands like Boston's ONLY LIVING WITNESS. Only Living Witness is a heavy metal band that has issued its debut release Prone Mortal Form. This four piece band sets themselves apart from much of the mediocrity in today's metal with a 10 song CD that shows their ability as musicians and songwriters. Vocalist Jonah Jenkins is ■ high point for the band because he is able to do a lot in his vocal delivery. The band is in the vein of Law & Order both in the vocal and musical style - they are heavy yet accessible and grabs your attention while listening. The songs ■ the disc contains such provoking titles ■ "Voice of Disrepair," "Twitching Tongues," and the title track. Only Living Witness has released ■ good debut that deserves a listen because it is different - the band isn't jumping on any bandwagon to get noticed but playing how they want and what they want. Don't be the only one left not to know what this band is like.

Last issue I did ■ review on the FINAL SOLUTION demo I got from 1991. Now the band has sent me their ■■■■ demo called Free Barabas and their style of music has changed. The last demo tape was in the vein of old Suicidal Tendencies and now the new material is in the death metal

vein. The lineup is still the same with Kathy Morgan on vocals and guitar, Chris Vitagliano on guitar, Pete Vassil on drums, and Michele Gentile on bass. I have to say that I like this demo better than their other one because I'm more of ■ death metal fan than ■ punk fan. Morgan's vocals ■■ good on the demo, her voice fits the heavier music better than punk. There are three songs on the demo "Sessions," "Laid To Rest," and the title track. I can't pick ■ favorite - all are appealing. If you like the heavy side of metal, then pick up a copy of ■ local New York band and see what they have to offer. Write to: Final Solution, 1034-67th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11219.

Some bands break up amidst problems they have to face, like losing a record deal and having to start over again. For other bands, like SOULS AT ZERO, the band becomes ■ stronger unit. Souls At Zero, formerly Wrathchild America, had to face problems after they ■■■■ dropped from Atlantic Records. The band, still consisting of the same members in WA, has now found ■ new home at Energy Records and released their selftitled debut for the company. This release is angrier and heavier than the work of WA's Climbin' The Walls and 3D as it reflects the feelings of the members during the time they ■■■■ without a record company. The band has stayed true to the WA sound but has progressed and matured. I think it is the band's best work to date because it is their most personal release. The 12 song CD comes with music and vocals that set the mood and allows the listener to feel the way the band did while they were recording. The song titles include the lead off track



SOULS AT ZERO

"Frustration," "Never," "Lost," "Grey World," and the song of their namesake "Souls At Zero." I've been a fan of the band since their first release and am glad that they have come back into the metal world with a new lease on life.

Though TAD has been around for about 5 years, this is my first exposure to the band's music. The Seattle based four piece band is set to release *Inhaler* on Mechanic Records in October and I am listening to the pre-release. I write this review. TAD is a heavy alternative band that fits in well with Soundgarden and Mudhoney. Vocalist Tad Doyle is gruff in his singing style, which contrasts well with the upbeat, accessible feel of the music. The band has to win an award for some of the most original song titles I've seen in some time. The more interesting titles of the 11 songs on the release include "Grease Box," "Leafy Incline," "Luminol," "Just Bought The Farm," and "Paregoric." Look out for *Inhaler* if you are willing to take a chance on a band that is a little different than the norm you hear on the radio.

RAT RACE is another local band that I had reviewed in Jersey Beat and I have received their most recent demo for review. The band has the same lineup as well on this release with Luke Darnell (vocals), Soos (drums), Jon Presnell (bass), and Joey Young rounding out the band on guitar. On the new release, the band is as upbeat and catchy as ever with some great backing vocals. I found myself moving to the music this is commercial metal at one of its better points. The band's new demo contains five songs including "Old Man Blind," "Stay In Line," and to be a little interesting "One Eyed Lucy." Rat Race is a band that I could see being played on the radio as their songs are definitely appealing to a listener. If you don't get on the road and become a part of the rat race now, you may get stuck in a traffic jam and miss out on an up-and-coming band that can go far. So hurry and get in touch with the band at: Labate Management, 926 Belvidere Avenue, Plainfield, NJ 07060

Grindcore International, the heavier side of the independent company Red Light Records, has released an 11 song CD entitled *Grindcore's Death Row*, which features some of the heaviest bands I have heard. All of the bands on the CD are on the label and this compilation is a good buy for people who are interested in hearing new, underground death metal bands. The CD runs about 50 minutes long and features everything from experimental death metal bands like At The Gates, who use the violin on the track "Kingdom Gone" to the more extreme bands like Morgue and Afterlife, who play all out speed with the grunts and growls in the vocals on the tracks "Plagued Birth" and "Divine Enlightenment" respectively. Other notable bands are Therion (one of my favorite bands), with "Morbidity," Impaler's "Imminence of the Final Punishment" (one of the shorter songs but with the longest song title), and Paralysis's "Patrons of the Dark." *Death Row* is a good compilation because it gives you the opportunity to hear many different bands, all who have their full length releases available now. This may be your only chance to be on death row and live to tell about the experience.

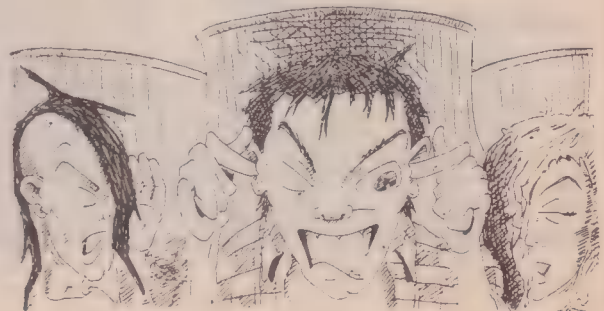
While in the death metal frame of mind, the last two reviews are on death metal bands. The first one is DISMEMBER, who return with their third release on Nuclear Blast/Relapse Records entitled *Indecent and Obscure*. This is a 9 song CD that has extreme, provocative music, lyrics, and cover art for an exciting experience. The band plays my favorite type of

death metal, heavy but catchy and very appealing. *Dismember* has many original riffs and changes as well as using a heavy, doomy guitar sound on a few of the tracks. I liked all the songs but the one that really got me was the last track "Dreaming In Red", with its mellow intro that goes into full fury. The other songs include "Sorrowfilled," "Case # Obscene," and "9th Circle." The production on the disc is done by Thomas Skogsberg at Sunlight Studios. This is like the Swedish version of having Scott Burns produce at Morrisound, so you know there is a quality sound on the disc. *Dismember* is one of the best death metal bands around and they prove why on their new release. If you don't pick up a copy of the new *Dismember*, it'll be indecent and obscure.

JL America has moved to a new location and has signed more good death metal bands like DETERIORATE. The band has their *Rotting In Hell* 10 song tape out now. *Deteriorate* is a four piece band out of Pennsylvania, who on their release show that they can play death metal with anyone. The music is heavy and the lyrics are graphic - but what else would you expect from a death metal band. I like *Deteriorate* because they are in the middle of death metal. Heavier than some but not as extreme as others. All the songs are good and include titles like "Agonized Display," "A Thousand Years of Anguish," "Shadows of Death," and the title track. I enjoy getting material from underground labels because it gives me the opportunity to hear new bands that I probably wouldn't hear otherwise. If you are a death metal fan, you should think about adding *Deteriorate* to your collection and maybe finding out what other bands the independent labels like JL America have to offer.

There are a lot more bands that I wanted to do reviews on but I didn't have the room, so I am going to list them as well as some new releases to be looking out for in the future:

BELIEVER - *Dimensions* (death metal with a 15+ minute "opera") on Roadrunner, also on Roadrunner, CYNIC's - *Focus* (like a death metal version of *Anacrusis*), on Century Media, MORGOTH's new one *Odium* and SENTENCED's *North From Here* (both are like progressive death metal), on Noise International, SKYCLAD's *Jonah's Ark* (progressive thrash that uses the violin a lot), and on Metal Blade, MERCYFUL FATE's *In The Shadows* (after almost 10 years King and the boys have reformed). You might also want to be on the lookout for CORONER's *Grin* and ENTOMBED's 6 song EP *Hollowman* as well as new releases by ATHEIST, BROKEN HOPE and MALEVOLENT CREATION among others.



Advocate is a New Jersey band that was formed 4 years ago by brothers vocalist Dan Stanley and guitarist Joe Stanley. After a revolving door of bass players and drummers, bassist Jerry Martini joined the band two years ago and on Friday, November 13, 1992, drummer Gerard Russoniello was added to complete the lineup.

The interview took place a few weeks ago and I asked the guys about the band, their music and the future among other various topics. Here's what transpired:

Q: Where did you get the name for the band?

Dan - "I was watching a movie with a druggie and his drug counselor who were in court and his counselor said 'I'm your advocate.' I said that's a pretty damn good name - it clicks

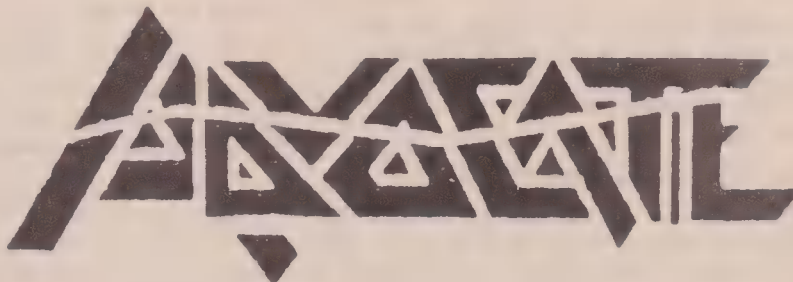
in people's head. Another reason I wanted to pick "A" because when you look at albums you look at "A" first."

Q: How did you get into music?

Jerry - "I've always been a big fan of music but just listening didn't seem to do it for me anymore. I was listening to Priest and Maiden and when I heard (Steve) Harris, I wanted to play the bass. When I first started I had a great teacher for 6 months but after he left I had some other teachers but they weren't good so I got out of it for some time. The first 3 years I wasn't real serious - I got together with friends but I decided that I couldn't work with friends because it was too easy to say, 'let's go out and get some beers'. Then I decided to call some ads and Advocate was the first one I

called. Once I got into the band I started really practicing and improving."

Gerard - "It started for me in the 4th grade when I came home and wanted to play the violin because all my friends were playing the violin. My dad said that he would get me a guitar or drum set or a bass. When I heard drum set, I went 'yea'. I took snare drum lessons for 2-3 years and continued



for another year after I got a drum set for my birthday. I couldn't take the discipline, so I lost interest for two years. Then I moved to Florida and met up with some guys that were into a lot of bands and I opened my mind to different music. I got back into it and I've been in about 10 bands in the last 4 years. This is the first band I've been in that I found my place, I feel."

Joe - "For me, and I have to include Dan in this since we grew up together and were always best friends, it started when Dan got a Sears drum set when he was 8 and I was 6. He'd bang away on one side and I'd bang on the other. We did a Kiss concert for the neighbors with our friend, the 'singer' in the band and had his sister paint us up as Kiss. I started playing guitar when I saw one that I wanted and got



it for Christmas when I was 11 or 12. I couldn't play it at the time, and there is only so much you can learn from a book, so when I was 13 or 14 I started taking lessons and really liked it. Everything was a cover song and I decided that the only way to learn is to do it on my own. I got so much out of the theory part that I could and I scraped all the cover songs, except for the Iron Maiden ones. Dan and I played in bands with friends too and Jerry's right, it is hard to play with your friends."

Dan - "I was playing drums at the time when I was in the studio with my friends band. I told them that they needed a guitar player and I would give a whirl at singing. I had a book in hand with a squeaky voice and I used to face the drummer when I sang."

Q: How did Jerry and Gerard join the band?

Jerry - "I saw the ad in the East Coast Rocker and decided to call. I thought that when I talked to Dan he said they lived in Berkeley Heights and I didn't want to drive that far. I ended up deciding to go for it 3 months later and called them back and they told me they practiced in the Woodbridge area."

Joe - "It was funny because the day before he called we had a bass player already and set everything up for him to come down and bring his gear but he crashed his truck and had no way to get to practice. So that's how we got Jerry."

Gerard - "I was in a record store and I saw a cheesy piece of paper with 'Advocate seeks drummer' on it with the influences of Maiden, Testament, Metal Church, and Megadeth. Then I walked around the store and picked up an Aquarian and looked in the musicians wanted page and there it was again 'Advocate seeks drummer' and I knew I had to call these guys. When I called I asked if they had a full band. I said 'Do you have a singer?' My last band tried for a year to get a steady singer and bass player. When I first came down, I thought these guys have definitely got it. They showed me a video tape of a show with their previous drummer and gave me a tape of the band. They told me to take my time learning the stuff, I told them I'd call on Friday. That on Monday and on Wednesday I called and told them I knew the songs, so they had me come down and I played the songs all the way through."

Dan - "We weren't really a band until Gerard joined. Now we're looking to the future. All the songs we had before Jerry joined he now plays his way and it's the same with Gerard."

Q: What do you think is the biggest asset of the band?

Joe - "I think the biggest attribute of the band is that we all get along, we're friends. We don't hold grudges - we argue but the next day we're all focused on what we have to do. We can come down to practice and talk to each other. When we are on stage and someone makes a mistake, we all know where we are. We're there for each other. We want

to make it together."

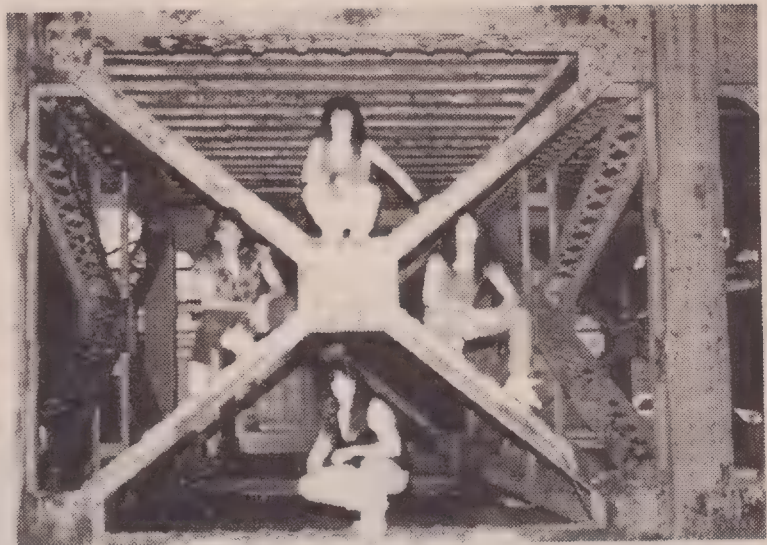
Dan - "We're not superstars, everybody plays a part. We gotta be a team. We all really want to make it - it's our dream, our goal."

Gerard - "We are able to come down here and sit back and talk if we're feeling frustrated or anything else. We learn from each other. When we get together our sound clicks. I used to be a just a player before but now I'm learning the business part as well."

Q: How do the songs come together?

Dan - "We write them as a team. We like all our songs to be different, we divide up simplicity with some technical. We write stuff we like and hopefully the listener will enjoy it too."

Joe - "Basically in writing a song we are all working on riffs at practice and we got parts going here and there. While we're doing that, Dan is working on a song; penciling in ideas. At the end of the night, when we are ready to record, we try all the ideas we have and we all work together for the best in the songs."



Jerry - "The lyrics aren't that much different from how we come up with the music. Everybody chips in ideas - we'll all come up with the music and we'll all come up with lyric parts. One time one of us will arrange the lyrics, another time someone will arrange the music; it's different every time. We have a strong combination of catchy sounding music with technical stuff."

Gerard - "The new songs show the diversity of the music. It is a different style from the first song Advocate wrote, 'Paths of Death.' We've all grown as musicians."

Q: Could you talk briefly about some of the songs you have. (The first four discussed are on their self-titled demo).

Dan - "'Paths of Death' is about a guy who goes to sleep, kinda like in the movie 'A Christmas Carol', but here he's dying in his sleep."

Joe - "He's a bad guy and his dream he had a path to choose. He was what was there and decided to go straight."

When he woke up, he was reborn."

Jerry - "'Save Us' is more or less what the Bible predicts for Christ coming back."

Dan - "The idea too is that **we** **are** killing ourselves in this world - like the line in the song goes, 'We're burying ourselves in a six foot hole'."

Dan - "'Do or Die' - that's set in futuristic times. Every man for himself - running in chaos."

Dan - "'Odyssey' - it relates the tale of Ulysses in the famous Homer poem."

(they discussed some of their new songs next)

Dan - "'Sick Of It All' is about **a** girl who runs away from home at 13 because she was abused by her father. She realizes that it isn't easy to survive and gets into drugs and prostitution."

Jerry - "'Dangerous', to me, is about how power corrupts someone like the president, who has the ultimate amount of power. It when these people believe, in their minds, that they are mightier than God."

Gerard - "'No Words Left To Say" is about losing a friend because of drinking and driving and its your fault. It is speaking from the guy that killed his own friend. This song has a lot of different styles put together - there's power metal to speed to death to a 50s blues riff. It started with me playing the simplest beat on the drum and Joe began strumming along. The song **is** different when it started out."

Q: Do you prefer playing live or recording in the studio?

Dan - "There's definitely nothing like playing live. It's the most enjoyable thing to have people you don't know come up to you (after a show) and say 'Wow, I really liked it'. Your friends are there and there's people there to cheer you on; it feels really great."

Joe - "Our sets for our shows is a variation of styles - **we** try to break it up and play different ones each time."

Jerry - "To have something that you and your band helped create that other people enjoy is the ultimate feeling."

Q: What is it like being from the New Jersey/New York area?

Joe - "We'd like to gain popularity here before we go into New York since we've never played there. We know where we are from and once **we** can make it here, **we** can make it anywhere. You can't start spreading yourself out or you become another name in the Aquarian. Everything we do here is for **a** purpose - we plan our shows for our best interest."

Dan - "I like being from Jersey. I don't want to live in LA - there's a lot of glam and competition."

Q: Anything else you'd like to add?

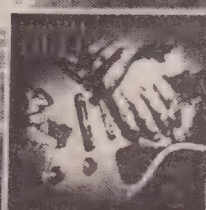
Joe - "We appreciate fan letters. A nice letter cheers us up and makes what **we** do worthwhile."

If you'd like to write the band a letter to find out more, you can get in touch with them at: PO Box 396, Avenel, NJ 07001.

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by **Mad Man** Sonzala

It's the Fall of 1993, everybody out there got the jazz. It's what's selling, it's what's hot; it's been selling, it's been hot. Innovators are moving on. Chopping shit up, looking for some next shit. Check out a track called "Come Clean." The group is **Dirty Rotten Scoundrels**, the producer, Premier. **Gangstarr**, the mad jazz pioneers and innovators, are moving on the next level. My man Jeru (Dirty Rotten Scoundrels) sounds like he's rappin' from the top floor of a project house during a rainstorm, catching gripe and shit. (Some ill underwater shit here too.) Still, he stays on point and delivers one of the hottest underground singles of the Summer. Truly, some next shit, never heard anything like it. Watch for ■ commercial release of "Come Clean" very soon on Payday Records.

It's the Fall of 1993 and everybody wanna sound grimey. You can't fuck with **Onyx**. *Bacdafucup* is one of the hardest hitting releases of the year, so you know it's on. Check the **Hoodratz**, the **Cutthroats**, and countless others across the country relying on proven style to help sell their records. You gotta pay dues, kid! You gotta pull from within, tear yourself out and emit your feelings, your vibes, your emotions, your politics, your expression is yours and nobody else's. Anyone can imitate for a single or two, but the brothers and sisters in the industry who have proven themselves time & time again and established longevity have always been on some next shit (save maybe for **Too Short**.) **KRS-ONE**, he never really changes up, but always manages to stay ahead of the rap game. I got a chance to check his new shit back in April, up in the Jive offices (almost dubbed it when Jeff Sledge left. Kelly Woo, rap editor from the *Gavin Report*, brought me down to earth tho... What up, Kel?) and it's crazy phat. Check out the single "Outta Here" and the bugged out B side, "I Can't Wake Up." It's out of control. Produced by Premier, Kid Capri, and ■ host of others. Yo, **KRS** comes fly once again (notice I didn't say Boogie Down Productions?!?)

Man, *Saved By The Bell* is on, is there ■ high school

Nikki D.

Photo by Jim Testa



anywhere in this world that's still like that? A public school at that! TV is fucked up all around, anyway you look ■ it. MTV obscures the pot leaves in **Dr. Dre**'s videos but does ■ whole story on the singer from the **Black Crowes** pants, which were covered in pot leaves. Dre blew up. MTV has to play high shit, think of how many hip hop videos never get shown on MTV. Not even on the minuscule "Keep the Negroes quiet" **MTV Raps**. And how can you have a Top 10 rap countdown if you don't play rap at any other time? Top 10 what? Somebody needs to pump some dollars into Oakland's *Soul Beat* with the quickness. They play rap and r&b videos 24/7, and used to be down here in Houston on



cab. No more. Somebody needs to hook them up.

Down here Texas way, things are changing. No longer will we fall victim to sneers & jeers from y'all up there back East. We're 'bout to drop some flavor. Leading the pack ■■ Dallas' **Mad Flava**, who combine a House Of Pain-ish style with credible street savvy and a fly, more notably prominent DJ (Baby G, 1991

DMC World Champion.) Their debut lp *From The Ground Unda* will be out in November on Priority Records and has some definite hits on it. "Bump Ya Head," "Housewreckers," "Spread The Butta," dope as hell, tho' Chris Cold does sound ■ lot like Everlast. What up, fellas?

The Odd Squad's right up there with 'em. Odd? Yes, odd ■ hell. Their lead rapper/producer Rob Quest is blind and their first single, "I Can't See It," dispels all feelings that this brother is just a gimmick. The Odd Squad combine jazzy yet funky tracks with an

equal mixture of illed out, skillful vocals and laid back Southern-style diatribes. They rap basically about getting fucked up and pulling women. Definitely a party album, one to ill out on and say, "Them fools from Texas? On Rap A Lot?" We're ready to fuck with your head down here. Also be on the lookout for a crazy crew called **K-Otix**, out soon on New Style Records (distributed by Priority.)

Oh yeah, Priority dropped Rap A Lot. Where the successful indie will go now for distribution is still undetermined. Ruthless Records (former home to **NWA**, now housing **Eazy E** and **Blood Of Abraham**) has moved to Relativity for their distribution. All kinds a power moves within the industry that we the consumer never see. The music biz is ill. Spend ■ day at a label, just one day. You'll ■■■ what I mean.

Back Jersey way, what's up with the Flavor Unit? I think the "Roll Wit Tha Flava" single should have come out a little bit later, closer to the release of the album, cuz there was a madd buzz on the streets when the single dropped. But by the time the lp came, it had all but died and the record didn't do shit, saleswise. It certainly didn't reach its potential, and "Freak Out," the latest from Jersey City's **Nikki D.** really doesn't represent the album all that well, as good ■ it is. Nikki is fly, but it's hard as hell to get the public to respond to a female rapper in the same way they woulda dug, say, ■ new track by **Naughty By Nature** or **Black Sheep** or some shit. Much respect to **Queen Latifah** and the Flavor Unit crew, I wanna see y'all blow up, but you need to push that shit hard. Speaking of Latifah, word is she got dropped by Def Jam. And now that she's doing the acting gig on her Fox tv show, you gotta wonder

■ how big a role rap is gonna play in the lady's future.

Big Beat Records has some fly kids from Newark called the **Artifacts** slated for release later this year. Their debut on wax is a collaboration with the **Nubian Crackers** called "Do You Wanna Hear It?" currently blowing up all over the nation. On the flip, check out the ragga stylings of one **Fragga Ranks** over that same Nubian Crackers madness. Whoooo!

Derelicts like myself can't help but get with "21 And Over," the debut lp from **King Tee's** crew, **Tha Alkaholiks**. A straight up party record that showcases three of the flyest voices hip hop has ever seen. Jacko, Tach, and E-Swift drop ill drunken-style rhymes (way over par) over some of the finest production hip hop has heard in ■ long time. Not west coast, not east coast, not old school, not new school, just dope. They even blow domes on the required chronic cut (it's '93, G, everybody gotta rap about weed,) "Mary Jane." Not your typical ode to the sticky stuff,

tha 'liks pay tribute in their special, abstract way. You'll bug. In line for LP for the year. Right by Masta Ace and Ultra.

You know who's blowing up, though? The **Hieroglyphics**. On the serious yo, everybody is talkin' about those cats from coast to coast. Led by the magnificent **Del Tha Funkee Homosapien**, the Hieros' first two offerings - "Souls Of Mischief" and "Casual" - ■■ setting off some wild shit. A crew of Bay Area brothers with madd skills. Check it, they say they'll take *anyone* in ■ freestyle contest. In fact, they've issued ■ challenge to anybody to knock 'em out the box. I checked back in May at the Souls' release party and they wrecked it. Name ■ group from New York and I bet

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they were there: Sadat X, Premiere, Leaders Of The New School, Prince Paul, Tribe Called Quest, Kurious, Rock Steady Crew, the list goes on and on. Everybody's checkin' for these kids. Don't sleep, Del's got some shit on the way too.

On the flip, feelings seem to be mixed on the new Run **DMC** album. The kings of hip hop (we all know it's true) got some of the phattest cuts of the year on the album - "Can I Get It Yo?" (produced by EPMD,) "Down With The King" (produced by Pete Rock,) "Come On Everybody" (produced by Q-Tip) - but some of the cuts are just not what I've been waiting these last few years for. The album's solid, but on one cut, Run rhymes over a Naughty By Nature track and sounds exactly like Treach, which leads me to believe Treach may actually have written the verse. Wack.

Run DMC aren't the only hip hop innovators coming back hard in the nine-tre. **De La Soul** **■** on the way back with *Buhloone Mind State* and **Tribe Called Quest** are set to drop *Midnight Marauders*. Both albums have been kept under wraps so tight, it's said that even some people from their respective labels haven't heard all the cuts. I can tell you that De La's first single, "Breakdown" b/w "En Focus," is beyond wonderful - makes ya **■** warm inside, all happy and shit. Get set for that.

I gotta pause for **■** second and complain once again... Take **■** trip down to your neighborhood record store and scan the rap section. Look how many new albums have dropped in the last month, from wack to wonderful, hip hop is just getting saturated. Rarely do any of the artists go gold, and we won't even mention the P word. Platinum doesn't even exist in the minds of most rap labels. Too much bullshit like

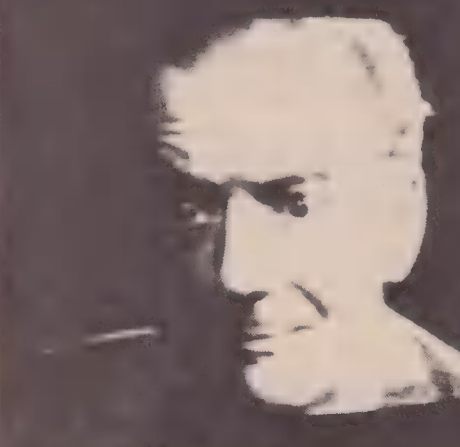
the **Clique**, **Blood Of Abraham**, **95 South**, **Duice**, all these idiots get released and promoted because they talk about girls shaking their asses, or their second-rate NWA fantasies. Come on now, **Diamond D's** record barely hit 200,000. He had one of the best hip hop releases ever, come on now. What I'm getting **■** is - be selective, only buy the albums I give props to, cuz I'm right... Anyways, you know what I'm saying.

One record with the potential to go triple platinum in my mind is *The Four Horsemen*, the third lp from **Ultramagnetic MC's**. Whoo, Kool Keith, Ced Gee, Moe Love and TR are on some illshit this time. Personally, I like *Funk Your Head Up* (their second lp) though many said it wasn't quite as crazy as their debut, *Critical Breakdown*. Well, this one is nuts, *Critical Breakdown Part II*. It takes about 1000 listens to truly understand what these cats are talking about and the addition of special guest

Godfather Dom is definitely cool.

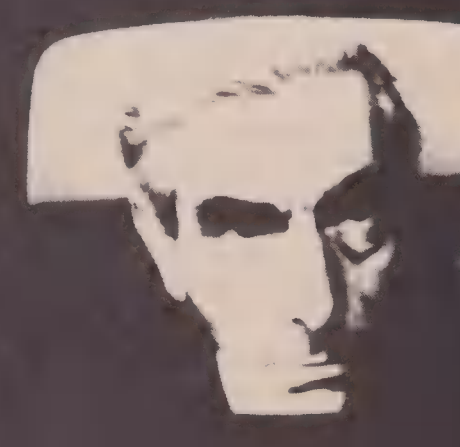
Sorry I bugged out last issue, I did write a column but I guess I **w** **■** on Madd Matt time, three weeks late, so it didn't get printed. If you're down Houston way, check out our Hip Hop Coffee Shop, it happens every Thursday night and we showcase some of the region's finest hip hop. I also do **■** radio show here called *Droppin' Bombs-Strictly Hip Hop*. I'd love to spin some bombs from all over, so if you're at **■** label or doing your own record, send some shit my way and we'll get in on the air and in this column for ya. In the meantime, Support the real shit, fuck the bullshit, and keep the underground alive. Peace.

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1000 YOUNG - "Agape E Katsika" (Blurred Records, PO Box 1608, Albany NY 12201) An impressive demo from this Albany-area quartet, combining everything from big catchy pop-metal hooks to intricate prog-rock guitar solos, along with quite a bit of dissonant weirdness (and all often in the same song.) Production and musicianship are both first-rate on this album-length cassette, with crisp drums, youthful vocals, and an unending array of guitar theatrics. Many of the tracks are almost too busy, but even if their ambitions almost betray them, they manage to make it hang together. - Jim T.

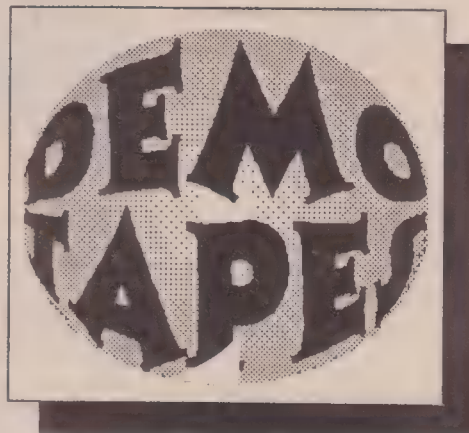
BABY DROWSY - "3 For 3" (No address) The last time Scott Harbison was in a band, he was wearing a dress and backing John Mastro in Hoboken's Green Granny. Now he and his wife Andrea have put together their own combo (with longtime Hoboken scenester Jimmy Morrison on drums, John Marmora on bass and Bruce Frazer on guitar) that's almost as kitschy but not quite as weird. Baby Drowsy is yet another retro-new wave combo, who borrow from the campy style of early Blondie (who in turn borrowed from Sixties girl groups, surf rock, and garage bands). It's lively, perky, funny stuff, and probably a hoot live, although it's just a bit too cutesy wootsy for my tastes. - Jim T.

BALLOON SQUAD (PO Box 199, Bergenfield NJ 07621) A lot of people mistakenly compare Balloon Squad's rapturous pop to the old Hoboken scene, but these guys sound nothing like the Bongos or dB's. Where they belong, actually, is in Olympia, Washington; if they got to play on a level field with Lois, Heavenly, Tiger Trap and all those cute K Records bands, they'd wipe the floor with them. It's just a lot harder to get noticed when you're from Bergenfield, NJ - not exactly the pop/rock capital of the world. Joe Merkle's gee-whiz vocals, now beautifully accompanied by Sarah Gleason's, the delicate melodies and the light, friendly touch the band brings to every song walk a very tricky tightrope of emotions - clever without being coy, sentimental without becoming cloying, loveable without getting cute. A very major talent resides behind the goofy grin and those big wire-rimmed glasses of this Joe Merkle fella. You really oughta check him out. - Jim T.

BEETHOVEN BROTHERS (Tom Mac Farlane, 16 E 39 St, Bayonne NJ 07002) I don't know where this combo has been hiding. They sent an album-length demo with a dozen songs but I've never seen their name advertised at a club or on a flyer hereabouts. Like Balloon Squad, the B'Brothers offer a retro-pop sound reminiscent of early New Wave, with bright, shiny melodies and crisp, sunny vocals, clever lyrics, and brisk, energetic drums. Sounds like a band I'd like to see, if they actually play out anywhere. - Jim T.

BUDDHA ON THE MOON - "Lazy Smile" EP, "Reversi" EP, "Crepe Paper Airplane" EP (Tremelo Appreciation Society, 3402 Garrott, #13, Houston TX 77006) - Buddha On The Moon are from Houston and started out as a one-guy-doing-everything project, then became a full-fledged band. "Lazy Smile" is pretty cool, very MBV/Galaxie 500-influenced with hints of Ultra Vivid Scene, Red House Painters, and Medicine. It's not as derivative as it sounds, though. "Reversi" is the

next step up, with a few more effects and a lot more layering. "Cascading" sounds like a lost Slowdive track, with buried vocals and a fuzzy guitar blanket. I'm partial to the headphone warrior tape manipulations of "(Inverting) Painless" and the cover is an awesome Spacemen 3 song. "Crepe Paper Airplane" is their latest and finest of the bunch. It reprises two songs from the other EP's and adds a handful of originals. This recording benefits from a full band playing the songs, not just one guy doing everything. There's also drums on this one, largely missing from the first two records. It's a lot more focused too. Send six or seven bucks and you can get all three tapes. These folks are good folks. - Jodi S.



DOC HOPPER - "Aloha! Tour Tape 1993" (23 Highgate St, Allston MA 02134) This tape, which the band sold out of their van on their summer tour, is a preview of an upcoming album, along with some extra tracks recorded for compilations, and it's a non-stop pop/punk joyride from the first cut to last. The cool covers (ranging from Simon & Garfunkel to Creedence Clearwater to John Mellencamp) couldn't be better - they all evoke an almost Normal Rockwellish portrait of America, but they're all sung at breakneck tempo with snotty vocals reminiscent of very early G.G. Allin. The originals rock too, with cool tunes and clever lyrics. Catchy song titles too, like "Post Letterman/Tuesday Morning 4 a.m." Check these guys out, they are one cool band. - Jim T.

DUOCHROME - "Lack Luster" (Well Primed, PO Box 351, New Brunswick NJ 08903) This is Well Primed Records' honcho Frank's band, formed after he was cordially invited to leave kiaro scuro. Unlike most New Brunswick bands - most of whom sound like they're just saving up the plane fare to move to Seattle - Duochrome have a distinctly British sound, a wall of dense distortion and feedback that recalls Jesus & Mary Chain even as it borrows from the Velvet Underground and Brian Wilson's druggiest psychedelic excursions in the post-surf Beach Boys. Put them on your list of New Brunswick bands to keep an eye on, especially since they're obviously riding their own stylistic wave instead of floating with the current. - Jim T.

EX-VEGAS - "Statewide Demo" (438 Denison St, Highland Park NJ 08904) This four song demo captures more of the 4AD-ish allure of the promising New Brunswick quintet, but still doesn't deliver the impact of their live show (especially the pheno-



SAIDCHILD

menal talents of their drummer, Rich Sternin.) Amy Jacobs' ethereal vocals work their magic though, backed by ■ throbbing frenzy of feedback, distortion, and crazed guitar noise, sorta like what the Pixies might have sounded like ■ they jammed with Sonic Youth on Halloween. Obviously somebody with a little money has to sign these guys and put them in a proper studio, where they'll be able to get it right. In the meantime, watch for the name and if you get ■ chance, go see them, your life will not be the same. - Jim T.

fieldfresh - "Bend Over" demo (468 Fairwood Cir, Rochester NY 15623) Rochester's field-fresh have something good going. They've got elements of Mudhoney, Melvins and the Gories in 'em, but sound like none of them (they lean towards Mudhoney in the end, though.) Each copy of this demo comes with two different bonus tracks (mine ■ some phonecall tapes and a cover of Mudhoney covering Sonic Youth's "Halloween.") The sound quality is a little lacking but you can hear the potential. Their live shows are something to see ■ well. Sarcastic lyrics are all around as well as ■ sense of humor about themselves. Get these guys into a good studio and they could do ■ serious damage. Keep an ear out for 'em. - Jodi S.

FUSSBUDGETS (PO Box 191671, San Francisco CA 94119) Another neo-pop band with a simple, airy sound. Nothing fancy, just light guitars, bass, and drums, and three catchy songs about nothing in particular. Nothing I'd do cartwheels over (with my back? cartwheels? ■ you nuts???) but if they showed up on the bottom on a bill, I'd get there early enough to check them out. - Jim T.

GLOBAL DISROBAL - "Unstoppable"/"Automatic" (Box 6661, Somerset NJ 08815) Global Disrobal's dreamy dance pop is a direct descendent of U.K. faves like Depeche Mode and the Bunnymen, but this outfit does it with only two people. Lots of lush keyboards and layered vocals on this cassette-single, with strong melodies and a nice beat. Just the thing to pop into the boombox while punting down the Thames. - Jim T.

THE KRAYONS - "Illusions Of Freedom, Delusions Of Grandeur" cassette (6237 Hanley, Corpus Christi TX 78412) This reminds ■ of Soul Asylum. It's not ■ ripoff, that's just who this brings to mind, probably because of the simililar vocals. This is pretty good, upbeat pop-punk with ■ rock influence. Well worth checking out if you're into mid-tempo music. - Bob B.

THE KUNG FOOLS - "Kung Fools" (THD Records, 2020 Seabury Ave, Minneapolis MN 55406) This is a must-buy for all fans of humorous punk rock. It reminds me of the first two Queers EPs and ■ touch of Naked Aggression when Ellen sings. The humor is in the Quincy Punx vein. This is very good and very catchy. All six songs ■ great. I hope to see some vinyl soon by these goofs. - Bob B.

LOST SOULS - Demo (646 Glen Avenue, Westfield NJ 07090) The Jersey grindcore band has all the usuals down right - bludgeoning thrashmetal riffs, speed-of-sound tempos, vocals that sound like the singer gargles with Drano - but they add ■ humor. At least, I think "Squash The Puppy" was supposed to be funny. Plus ■ one in the band is old enough to vote yet. Lost Souls indeed. If they're doing deathmetal ■ 16, think of what they'll be like at 20. - Jim T.



Photo by Jim Testa

THE UNKNOWN

MEATHEADS - "What The?" (1090 Country Club Rd, Bedminster NJ 07921) Another New Wave revival band, with that New Jersey power pop sound that's slowly but surely taking over the club scene. If you've ever heard the Gekfens, Oral Groove, or the Whatnots, you'll have an idea of what this is like. Otherwise, think of updated Knack-era "New Wave" with less cheese production and vocals. - Jim T.

PANDORA'S LUNCH BOX - (Peter Gottovi, PO Box 2071, Wilmington NC 28402) Obviously a college band from that fertile crescent of alternative rock in North Carolina, Pandora's Lunch Box ■ weird little songs overflowing with literary allusions and baroque imagery. The music, catchy garage punk, works fine, and I like the timber and ironic edge in the vocals. On some of the songs, the band's odd ■ of humor works fine ("John Henry Has A Hammer" is ■ particularly effective set piece that's probably killer live,) but ■ lot of this stuff has a Primus-like wackiness that can get annoying. Still, most NoCar bands are ■ laid back, it's nice to find one that can afford to tone it down a little. - Jim T.

THE PRIDE (142 So Franklin St, So Nyack NY 10960) This is one of those bands built around ■ voice - in this case, the beautifully emotive vocals of Corinna Ziegler. Her brother Zach provides lovely guitar work, embellished with bright, sparkling effects like chorus, wah wah, and flange. Most of the songs are mid tempo ballads that could pass for Pearl Jam melodies if you added ■ layer of grunge, but the last track, "Things That Go Bump In The Night," adds a psychedelic-pop twist that reminded me of the Partridge Family. And I don't ■ that as a criticism. - Jim T.

RED FOOTED GENIUS - "Hydraulic" (184 Hargadine St, Ashland OR 97520) Three guys who must be very depressed. Every song ■ this album-length cassette is a sad ballad. I'm not talking about the usual post-adolescent angst; you have to raise your voice to sing that kind of stuff. All of these songs are just plain dreary, laconic, mid-tempo tunes, even when the lyrics suggest livelier themes. I can't imagine how this works in clubs. These guys must either attract dewy-eyed couples into Sylvia Plath and R.E.M. who like to slow

dance, or unregenerate losers who sit by themselves in the dark and cry in their beer. - Jim T.

ROACH FACTORY - Demo (15 Perry Drive, Manhattan KS 66502) This band is ■ that difficult turning point in their career; they don't have anything left to prove in their hometown, where apparently they're more popular than Coca Cola, but they've yet to make ■ dent in the real world. Like fellow Kansasites Paw and Season To Risk, Roach Factory manufacture grungy rock and roll; but unlike those other two bands (who both made ■ over the rainbow and onto major labels), these guys don't add much that's ■ to the formula, and ■ like there's ■ least 'one loud, long-haired, flannel-clad band who sort of sound like Pearl Jam and Alice In Chains in every town these days. Nice presskit, though. - Jim T.

SAIDCHILD (5608 University Way #5, Seattle WA 98105) Forget everything you think you know about Seattle bands. Saidchild have Morrissey's hair, the Straycats' old sportsjackets, and ■ wild sound that's not quite like anything I've ever heard before. The guitars cascade like Faith No More ■ their most symphonic, ■ huge blast of harmonic chords fueled by ■ jet-propelled drumkit. The vocals have that emotional urgency you usually only hear in young hardcore bands whose singers haven't learned to shield their innermost thoughts from the world yet. The two-song demo I received is supposed to be coming out ■ a 7 inch. Watch for it. - Jim T.

SHALLOW (PO Box 1846, Wayne NJ 07047) This is the most no-frills demo I've ever received - no liner notes, no package, not even the little plastic box for the cassette. Just the song titles, band name, and address written on the tape. Still, that's all you need if the music's good enough. Shallow combine prog-rock orchestral arrangements (I kept thinking of Emerson Lake ■ Palmer) with ■ pop/punk vocal style and interesting rhythms that borrow from...I'm not sure, calypso maybe. There's one long instrumental that's actually pretty interesting, and two tracks on Side B with more aggressive vocals and a rougher approach. Certainly intriguing enough for me to check them out if they ever turn up ■ a club around here. - Jim T.

SMACKHEAD - "Barba" (% Patrick West, Trinity College #904, Hartford CT 06106) Take Guy Picciotto's clench-jawed vocals, lose all the melody and any kind of tricky rhythm - just shouted vocals over chunky power chords in four/four time. That's Smackhead, fronted by the editor of Change fanzine, Patrick West. On the last cut, the band adds a ska beat and a trumpet for ■ sound that defies easy comparisons.

SMOOTHBRAIN - Demo (47 Summit St, Nyack NY 10960) Most funk bands you find playing the shitty-club circuit in NYC suck because all they write are riffs. Smoothbrain can actually write songs, which makes this demo ■■■ of the best of this genre I've heard. Lead singer/bassist Drew has a froggy voice but can deliver a lyric, and boy, ■■■ these guys write hooks. The women like this band too. The first time I ■■■ them, the whole front of the stage was full of girls waving cameras. And last I heard, they broke up. Figures. - Jim T.

SURREAL - "Pensive" (Alan Semerdjian, 20 Attridge Ct, Melville NY 11747) The catchy, repetitive riff that opens "Another Day" signals this Long Island band as students in the R.E.M. school of jangly pop, although the lyrics are ■ far cry from the oblique mushroomed literary musings of those Athens art rockers. Surreal's ebullient vocals, simple, tuneful riffs, and tasty wash of keyboards sound so pleasant and airy that the lyric sheet comes as something of ■ shock. "Clowns ■■ dancing to an empty tune/a grand parade for the men in their three-piece suits," goes "Into The Light," ■■ to ■ melody ■■ sunny you'd think it was something you could teach Barney The Dinosaur. It's like my fortune

cookie said last week: Beware cute guys with long hair who traffic in irony. - Jim T.

THE UNKNOWN - "Change" (4080 Woodside Dr, No Royalton OH 44133) This album-length cassette ■■■■■ the arrival of ■ great ■■ power pop combo from that great rock n roll city, Cleveland. These guys write wonderfully catchy tunes delivered without ■ trace of camp or condescension - they just like to rock. A few funky tunes update the sound for the frat crowd, but it's their talent for inspired bubblegum ■■■ gets the nod from me. Cool cover of ■■■ Little Fingers' "Barbedwire

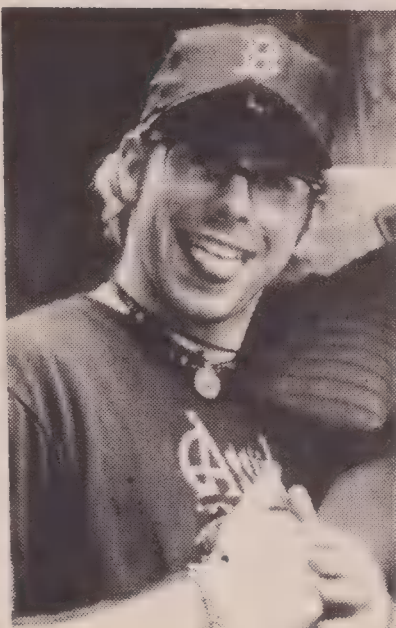


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Love" too. - Jim T.

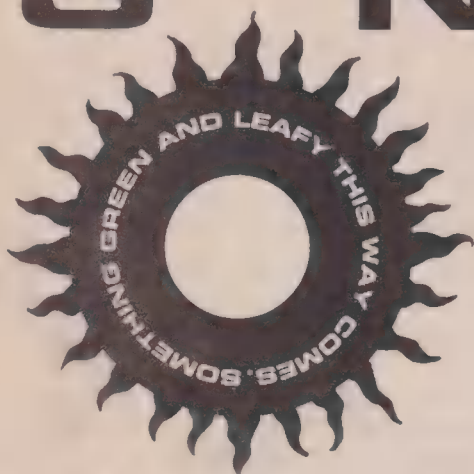
VAGUE NATION - "Shelf Life" (No address on tape) Four songs that live up to the band's name -- competent but unexciting mid-tempo tunes that waffle between lite-metal and alternative. The musicianship is there, the arrangements are fine, the production is very good, but they're in desperate need of ■ interesting idea. - Jim T.

THE WEATHER MEN - "Helloooo Sun!" (PO Box 73, Midland Pk NJ 07432) The simple, stripped down arrangements, buzzing guitar sound and catchy riffs of the Weather Men reminded ■■■ of a lot of the early Jersey hardcore bands, who borrowed from both the Ramones and the Mods. The vocal style is like that too, half-spoken and half-sung, with offkey group harmonies on the chorus. Actually, these guys sound exactly like a band from Keane College called Stetz, but it would probably be more helpful to call them ■ promising garage-punk group that's ■■■ ■ year or two away from finding itself. Of course, Stetz hung around ten years and still sucked but what's the odds of that happening twice in the same state? - Jim T.

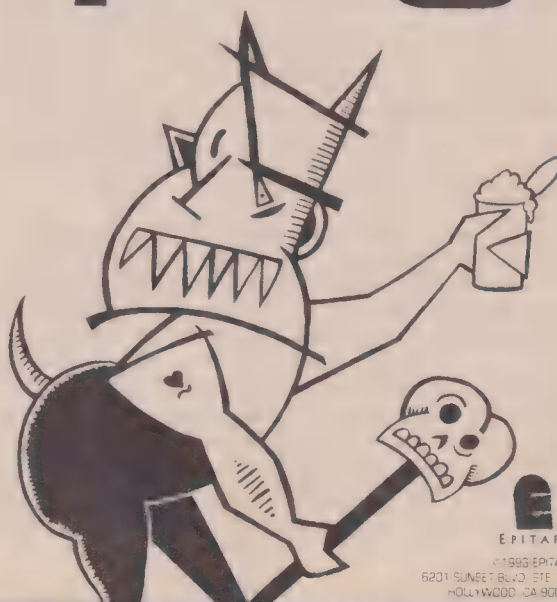
WORLD GONE WILD - A two-man group who fill out the music with synthesizers and drum machines. Very much like Tears For Fears - bright, catchy melodies, very upbeat and pop but with an element of British dance-rock (Depeche Mode, Bunnymen, etc.) The six songs here include ■ ballad and some more uptempo stuff for club play. Great pair of voices. The kind of tape that seems so commercial, you wonder why they aren't signed already. - Jim T.

CHRIS-DOC HOPPER

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RECORD REVIEWS

ALL - "Shreen" (Cruz) This 3 song sampler provides a little tease of what All's next album will be like and introduces their newest singer, Chad Price, who sounds a lot like the last one. "Shreen" is your typical Allian Bill Stevenson pop/punk masterpiece, maybe not quite in ■ class with "Clean Sheets" or "My Ex" but right up there. The two cuts on the flipside are slower, louder, noisier stuff almost veering toward metal, a scary thought indeed. - Jim T.

G.G. ALLIN & THE HOUSEPAINTERS - *Brutality & Bloodshed For All* The spokesman for the Nothing Generation went through more bands than bottles of Jim Beam or bags of dope, but the Murder Junkies not only lasted the longest, but have been the most talented. The addition of the burly Bill Weber (who replaced NYC's Chicken John of Letch Patrol fame) helps make this G.G.'s best recording, from the Black Sabbathesque drone of "Shoot, Knife, Strangle, Beat, Crucify" to the more modern punk strains of "Highest Power." Weber's musical direction is an obvious improvement over the many pedestrian bands that backed G.G. through the 80's, the perfect backdrop for the venomous lyrics spewed forth from Allin's hoarse throat. *Brutality* is ■ fierce attack on the fake and transparent culture most of us call daily living, and coupled with G.G.'s final performance, one of the most brutal and chaotic of his career, I think I can say that G.G. actually did accomplish his goal and die at his peak. He will be sorely missed. - Johnny Puke

ANTISEEN - *Eat More Possum* (Safehouse, PO Box 349, W Lebanon NH 03784) I was freaking on AntiSeen for ■ couple of years, I thought they were pure primal punk. YOU know, Lynyrd Skynyrd meets the Sex Pistols and all that. I grabbed all the singles I could find and told my friends to go ■■ them when they came to town. So when they came to town and went to see them and ... maybe it ■■ the gap caused by the combination of the tall stage and barricade, or maybe they were just off that night, but they were just terrible. I was totally embarrassed and since then, I've cooled it on the Antiseen tip. Then I get this. It's good. It's Antiseen with major production work by Jeff Dahl, but somehow it just doesn't spark me the way it used to. - Des Jr.

ARCHERS OF LOAF - *Icky Mettle* (Alias) - Sometimes a band comes along with a buzz and by the time you hear the album, you've heard so much hype that you just know the music will never live up to it. Happily, the Archers Of Loaf are everything they're cracked up to be, which is yet another terrific guitar band from that college/alternative Neverneverland down in North Carolina. Superchunk fans will delight in the band's raucous, rowdy vocals, shaggy melodies, and bursts of noise-for-noise's-sake, but there's enough personality and originality here to mark the 'Loaf ■ more than mere 'chunk wannabes. Check this one up, crank up the volume, and wait till they get to your town. - Jim T.

BAD BRAINS - *Rise* (Epic) In some circles, this has been *the* the most anticipated album of the year - the Bad Brains' major label debut and the official unveiling of their new vocalist, Israel Joseph I (who, for the record, sounds ■ bit like H.R. except with little of his power or gift for inventive phrasing.) The music doesn't sound dissimilar to the plodding mish-mash that was *Quickness*, the band's last lp. And the two reggae tracks (complete with Casio-sounding drum machine) mark ■ new low in the Brains' songbook. *Rise* is ■ thoroughly conventional funk/metal album from ■ band that was once the most inventive hardcore band around. What ■ waste. - Sal Cannestra

BAD RELIGION - *Recipe For Hate* (Atlantic/Epitaph) Contrary to popular belief, Bad Religion do not release the same album every year with ■ different cover. Apparently the folks at Time-Warner agree ■■ they've signed these once-staunch believers in the DIY punk ethic. *Recipe* retains the tight punk sound with heavy accent on vocal harmonies that we've come to expect, and with strong numbers like "Man With ■ Mission" (with its jazz influence) and "Recipe For Hate," Bad Religion prove they're still perfecting that expedient thump and multi-syllabic lyricism we've come to expect from one of America's longest-lived punk bands. - Johnny P.

BATS - *Silverbeet* (Mammoth) "Courage" is one of the best songs of the year, almost anthemic. The rest of this record follows nicely, with songs that are part Smiths, part Unrest, and part Yo La Tengo. It's too homogeneous to have many standouts but two of the more memorable songs are "Green" and "Halfway to Nowhere." If you like Kiwi pop, then you shouldn't pass this one up. - Jodi S.

BIG BOYS - *The Skinny Elvis* (Touch & Go) One of Nirvana's most redeeming factors after hitting the big time is that record companies everywhere ■■ now putting out compilations of old, classic punk bands that 95% of the population could have cared less about in their heyday. This is especially fun for the 5% of us who loved this crap to death. However, all marketing strategies aside, the Big Boys were, and forever will be, one of the most important bands of their era, not to mention one of the punkest. They're among the founding fathers of the current media music frenzy, and if one wishes to cut to the chase and get to the roots of alternative music, this collection of the Big Boys' best is an excellent place to start. - Danny Eldridge Jr.

BIG CHIEF - *Mack Avenue Skullgame* (Sub Pop) The loud, the lewd, and the funky. That's Big Chief's new album in a nutshell. It sounds exactly like *Motorbooty* fanzine reads (unsurprisingly, since Barry Hennisler and most of the rest of BC publish the damn thing.) You expect excellence from these Detroiters and you get it with each song, especially "10 Karat Pinky Ring." The Parliament Funkadelic influences keep their integrity because BC don't screw

around with them, unlike most of their contemporaries (who warp the funk into something un-funky.) Here, they cover P-Funk's "I'll Stay" with a vengeance, and still rock hard. Big Chief ■■■ funkier than a roomful of day old chitlins with ■ side of onions, a band that deserves to be noticed. - Jodi S.

THE BIG FISH STORY - *I Hate Parties* (Long Play, PO Box 55233, Atlanta GA 30308) Fun songs with honest lyrics about depressing topics, all done in tongue-in-cheek style. A song like "Where The Fuckheads Roam" makes me think of all those shit jobs I've had in the past, while "I Hate Parties" sums up all those forced endeavors ■ fun. Some cuts sound like filler, but overall ■ decent CD. - Tom Brebric

BLACK TRAIN JACK - *No Reward* (Roadrunner) This band features Ernie (ex-Token Entry) and his ex-roadies. West Coast punk rock done on the East Coast, with Freddy Mercury on vocals. This is ■ really cool record but the lyrics are lame City: "She found her roots/in Doc Marten boots." Hey, Rob, this is a long way from Positive Outlook, congrats. - Chickenhead.

BLISS - *Grafted To An Elbow* (Cargo) This reminded me of another Canadian band, Phleg Camp. This is moody and dull, with monotone vocals. And since the songs all run four to five minutes, they get pretty boring. This is your basic semi-emo/arty thing. If you like that sort of stuff, okay. Otherwise, stay far, far away. - Bob B.

BUILT TO SPILL - *Ultimate Alternative Wavers* (C/Z) The Superchunk influence is way out there on this trio's debut disc but ■ you're going to have ■ hero, you could do a lot worse. Still, the raspy vocals and slacker tempos do hit a responsive chord, and unlike Superchunk, who tend to speed things up when they run out of ideas, these guys slow 'em down, until by the end of the CD all you've got is laconic, ornate instrumentals. - Jim T.

CAUSTIC RESIN - *Body Love Body Hate* (C/Z) Caustic Resin has made my lifetime playlist - a pretty experimental album, almost like early Sonic Youth, yet this band crunches when they have to. It's so experimental that sometimes I thought this was a Shimmy Disc band. A Fukin' A two thumbs up wherever you would like them. - Dave U.

CHELSEA - *The Alternative* (Weser/We Bite German import CD) Chelsea were a minor constellation in the punk rock universe way back when, sort of second-string Stiff Little Fingers or a third-string Clash. I give them credit for still being around nearly 20 years later, and still rocking without falling into any of the cliches that aging punkers are heir to (cheesey metal, rockabilly, self-indulgent art-rock, *cyber-punk*). On the other hand, listening to ■ bunch of 40 year old geezers who still sound like a third-string version of the Clash sing, "It's time for all to unite ■ one/the time is now it's surely come/the tide has surely turned our way/death to all those bad old ways," and pronounce themselves (and, of course, their audience) "*the alternative*," is just ■ ■■■ bit



BLISS

Photo by Shawn Scallen

pathetic. - Jim T.

CHER U.K. - *She's A Weird Little Snack* (Red Decibel) I always thought Red Decibel was strictly ■ metal label, but Cher UK is an extremely pleasant, melodious power pop band, with excellent female vocals. There's some heavier moments here ■ there but mostly this reminds me of the Northwestern pop ■■■■■ (like Tiger Trap minus the attitude). Two thumbs up on this one. - Danny E.

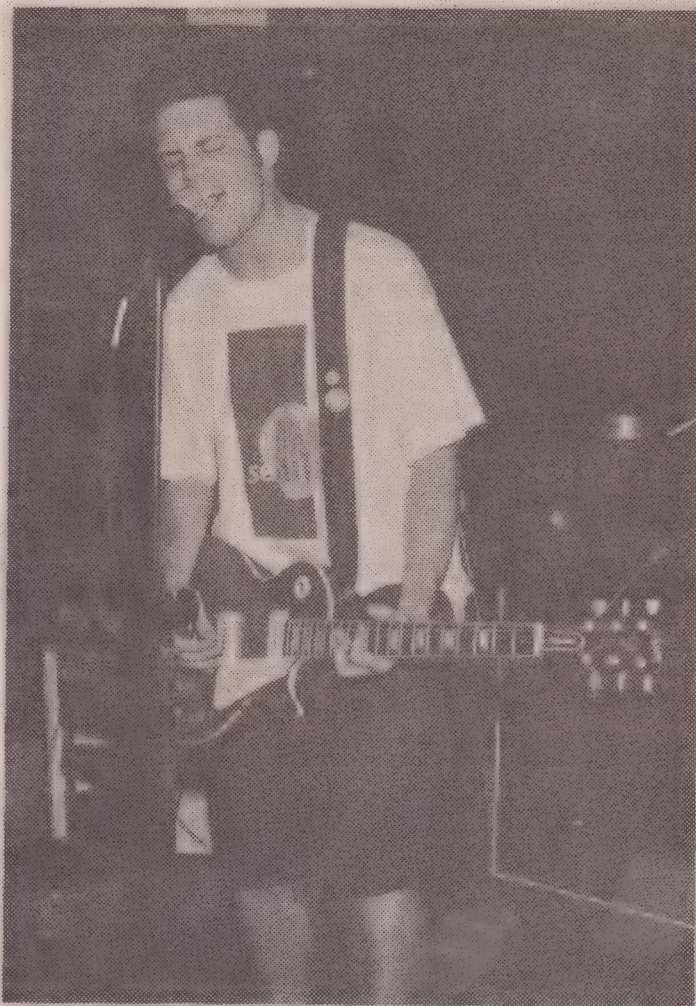
CIRCUS LUPUS - *Solid Brass* (Dischord) Picture this: Jawbox meets Johnny Rotten in D.C. and they listen to a bunch of metal records, then decide to write some songs and record them at Inner Ear (for that Dischord sound) and there you have *Solid Brass*. That's ■ compliment, not ■ criticism. - Chickenhead

CLUTCH - *Transactional Speedway League Anthems, Anecdote, and Undeniable Truths* (East/West) Finally, a band on East/West (a major label) I actually like. There ■■■ no sweet melodies, the tunes grind in every sense of the word. Neil Fallon's vocals ■■■ aggressively girthy as if he has ■ mouth full of dirt. With original song titles like "Walking IN The Great Shadow Of The Monster Trucks," any tv zombie's late-night nightmare, they can't fuck up. The CD title is ■ little contrived, but it'll do. - Dave Urbano

CREATURES OF THE GOLDEN DAWN - *1000 Shadows* (Dionysus) These Bethlehem, PA, garage retro-rockers do a good job with this style, with songs about girls. Jangly, guitar heavy, but nothing different from lots of other garage bands. Extra points for the picture of the gun pointing at your face on the cover of the CD. - Tom B.

DEAD MILKMEAN - *Not Richard But Dick* (Hollywood) Three months after being dropped by Hollywood Records (at which point they started turning up with jobs in local coffee jobs around Philly,) the Dead Milkmen have mysteriously been re-signed. The result: Ten more beautiful Dead Milkmen poems filled with all the classic, biting sarcasm you'd expect, and filled with more references to pop culture icons than you can shake the proverbial stick at. The fact that after 10 years of sheer genius in the recording industry, the Milkmen ■■■■ subjected to the terror of lowly day jobs simply shocks the bejeesus out of me. So if you're concerned about expressing your support for the true working class heroes of punk rock, you can prove it by supporting these guys, one of the finest enduring punk rock bands still kicking out the jams today. - Danny Eldridge Jr.

DIDJITS - *Sirhain* (Touch & Go) These three mooks are never going to cash in on the major label gravy train. They just won't play nice. Nice bands don't write smarmy songs about Agent 99 or Sirhain Sirhain, they don't celebrate teenage ■■■ ("Barely Legal") and wanton drug use ("Sick Of My Fix,") and most of all, they don't come off sounding like the bastard offspring of Kiss and the Buzzcocks. Nice



ENGINE KID

Photo by Shawn Scallen

bands don't do any of that shit; cool bands do. So thank Touch ■ Go and go buy this. You can even get it on vinyl. - Jim T.

DOG EAT DOG - *Warrant* (Roadrunner) - The Dogs' John Connor isn't the first singer to realize that the clipped, syncopated rhythms of rap complement the heavy riffing of hardcore punk - bands like Leeway and Anthrax have been doing it for years - but few others have the nerve to rap on every cut. Dog Eat Dog manage to pull it off, most successfully on the powerhouse cut "Psychorama." *Warrant* is a slice of Jersey night life you won't find on any of your Springsteen albums, but proof that even the toughest guidos on the block can make good bands. - Jim Testa

DON CABALLERO - *For Respect* (Touch & Go) Without a doubt, the strongest, tightest band ever to emerge from Pittsburgh; the city's best kept secret is literally teetering on the edge of nationwide distinction. Originally an instrumental trio, this astounding prog-rock foursome is constantly growing stronger and leaving muted stares of disbelief at



Photo by Jim Testa

GAUGE.

every performance. Popularly compared to such legends ■ Breadwinner and Bitch Magnet (sans vocals,) the 'Don' crush out more superhuman guitar than can possibly be believed without seeing it firsthand, and the drums, manned by veteran Pittsburgh rocker Damon Che, ■ possibly the band's most important asset, leaving concertgoers everywhere wondering how anyone's hands could possibly move so fast. This record has the undeniable touch of the legendary Steve Albini production, and only emphasizes that much more the power and pent-up energy of Don Caballero, which is released with such dexterity and tact in each and every song. A great loss albeit ■ proud moment for Manny Theiner's brilliant Pop Bus label, and an equally lucky acquisition for Touch & Go. - Danny E.

DWARVES - *Sugarfix* (Sub Pop) A great set of real songs from these fukheds. From the lonely with ■ hard-on plaint of "Anybody Out There" through boastful chest-thumping ("Evil Primal," "Reputation") into drug consumption and general decadence ("Saturday Night," "Smack City") and finally to waking up naked, sticky, smelly and hungover ("Wish That I Was Dead,") I sort of see this as a song cycle about how they want us to think of life as ■ Dwarf. It's all great retarded fun, plus most of these tunes are catchy ■ fuck. I don't know what's going to happen now that they've been dropped by Sub Pop, but this EP length CD does seem to mark a creative peak for this much-reviled band. I likes it. - Des Jr.

ENGINE KID - *Astronaut* (C/Z) Just a taste of this Northwest post punk outfit, created from the ashes of the late, great Galleon's Lap. The four songs here are slow to the point of sedation, with ■ swirling hypnotic groove that fans of stuff like Codeine (both the band and the drug) should savor. The last cut is ■ barely recognizable Neil Young cover. A full lp should be out by the time you read this. - Jim T.

FACE VALUE - *Kick It Over* (Doghouse, 101 Main St 2nd fl, Toledo OH 43605) Thank God that Face Value haven't pussied out like other hardcore bands. No new ground broken here but ■ still rocks. Lots of yelling and screaming vocals and ■ fast and hard beat. They even cover Black Sabbath's "Mob Rules." If you're in the mood for some good old-fashioned hardcore, check this out. - Bob B.

FLAMING LIPS - *Transmissions From The Satellite Heart* (Warner Bros.) The Lips' 6th release, though ■ good one, still leaves them in that tough to classify category. Original and talented, with a blending of melodic, acoustic, and psychedelic sounds that create imagery but are not easily deciphered by ■ lyric sheet, sound way cool when played. Also appealing is the band's "who cares?" attitude in regards to AOR sales and indie charts. - Tom B.

FUDGETUNNEL - *Creep Diets* (Columbia/Earache) The first song on this disc would be totally killer if it ■■■ about one minute shorter. As is, it seems to run out of steam just before the end. The rest of the LP stakes out ■ sort of sludge-lite primed for mass consumption. Well, if this shit's gonna hit, Fudgetunnel would probably be more accessible (and way cuter) than Napalm Death (though not as cute as Entombed.) I don't know, this just seems diluted and a bit compromised (not to mention boring.) Check out the new Buzzoven instead. - Des Jr.

FUGAZI - *In On The Kill Taker* (Dischord) What hasn't been said about Fugazi? Even if they got a bad review, still thousands of people would buy their records. No new ground broken on this release, though. They will be kings of emo forever, and they're still powerful and emotional. A very intense release. Still, most of the songs sound the same. Too bad every punk band in the world is copying them now, because I would probably like this more if ■ didn't sound like so much of everything else out there. This isn't ■ great album but you're still going to buy it. - Bob B.

GAUGE - *Soothe* (Radius/THD, PO Box 123, Lincolnshire IL 60069) Gauge ■■ the Fugazi of Chicagoland. Scott's vocals ■■ rough but in ■ strange way, smooth, and they go well with the music. The songs tend to sound the same, but they're all very emo. I'm not a big fan of this style of music, but they're very popular around Chicago so they must be doing something right. They really ought to be on Dischord. lan, sign these guys. - Bob B.

GIANT METAL INSECTS - *Asanisimasa* (Entropy, 106 Guilford St, Trumbull CT 06611) This is the album that gave my housemate Fran nightmares in his nap. This is their best recording to date, creepy and melodic along the lines of Faith No More, with Stephen Egerton (All & Descendents) metallish guitar riffing. After the 11th track, there ■■ a bunch of old quirky songs like "I've Been Working*On The Railroad" by Salli Terri, ■ woman composer. A cool album for your stack. - Dave U.

GIGANTIC - *Answer* (Heat Blast; Gigantic, 500 Frank Applegate Rd, Jackson NJ 08507) From way south Jersey,

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boon. Jad Fair's voice doesn't bother me anymore, which means either I like it or have just learned to tune him out. I think I like it. Fans of King Missile will eat this up (who do you think they got it from anyway?), as well anyone who can appreciate twisted song structures. - Jodi S.

HARD ONS - *Too Far Gone* (Skene) Good mix of power pop punk with a slight hint of metal. Very raw stuff here. Still really catchy in parts, but some songs don't quite have the snap of others. The guys from Poison Idea stop by to do some backups too. This is worth checking out if you haven't yet discovered this long-lived raging punk band from Australia. - Bob B.

HAZEL - *Toreador Of Love* (Sub Pop) Spunky pop/punk youngsters from Seattle (I think) with a good sense of humor, lots of catchy riffs, and a fortyish bozo with a beard who "dances" at all their gigs. Sounds a bit precious to me. Still, it's hard not to like a band that'd write a song about Boog Powell, so even if some of this stuff has an annoyingly infantile, Jonathan Richmanish quality, I'll give them the benefit of the doubt. (However, the cynic in me still says that if a major label comes a'knocking, they'll put the bozo on the first bus back to Palookaville.) - Jim T.

HEMI - *Hemi* (Big Money, Box 2483 Loop Stn, Minneapolis MN 55402) This was a letdown. I heard a lot of stuff about this band based on their 7 inches, but all this sounds like is bad heavy metal, or should I say Hemi-Metal? It wasn't boring, just a little too overproduced for my taste. The songs are catchy but just didn't keep me interested. - Bob B.

HOLY ROLLERS - *Holy Rollers* (Dischord) The blessed Holy Rollers have once again turned up another near-flawless ten songs on their new self-titled album. As on the now classic *Fabuley* and *As Is*, the signature Holy Rollers' wavy melodies are still here, as well as the characteristic D.C. singalong anthems. This is one CD that is obviously destined to spin for hours upon countless hours in my stereo, and as far as newcomers to the Holy Rollers are concerned, if you like Lungfish or Gray Matter, you should eat this up. Power-soaked and politically correct at the time. Washington *uber alles*. - Danny E.

HOOTY & THE BLOWFISH - *Kootchypop* (PO Box 5656, Columbia SC 29250) From the looks of it, some zany frat brothers got together and made an album about love, brotherhood, and homeless folks, and someone managed to get them signed. This should appeal to anyone who still likes Fishbone and thinks Faith No More has gotten better since they got rid of "that guy with the mohawk." - Danny E.

HUEVOS RANCHEROS - *Endsville!* (C/Z) Wow! I never imagined myself liking such a band. These three guys (yes, another trio!) wank out 15 tuneful instrumentals. This is not a novelty record, though, and it doesn't wear thin at all. Styles range from surf and rockabilly to ska (complete with handclaps) without losing that punky feel. I love how inside it says - for lyrics, send SASE. - J.Turri

ICEBURN - *Hephaestus* (Revelation Records, Box 5232, Huntington Beach CA 92615) This really confused me. It is so hard to explain this CD - four songs that all together last 79 minutes. It is emo, it's almost in a category by itself. Sort of jazzy with some blues in a weird sort of way, mixed in with some progressive hardcore, and all very dark and moody. Way too weird for me and a definite thumbs down. I

liked their first EP a lot better. - Bob B.

IGGY POP - *American Caesar* (Virgin) What do you do with Iggy? Praise him because this record doesn't suck as badly as many of his recent releases? Or condemn him because nothing he'll ever do will be as good as *Raw Power*? There certainly are moments here - the Igster's cover of "Louie Louie" is great, unexpected fun, and "Boogie Boy" is a blues-based rocker that I'd put right alongside my favorite Stooges stuff. But lots of this is just by-the-book Modern Rock, 81 minutes of it in fact, and there aren't a lot of other songs on here that I'd ever go out of my way to hear again. And the seven-minute spoken-word opus that ends of album is more painful than a root canal. - Jim T.

J CHURCH - *Camels, Spilled Corona, And The Sound Of Mariachi Bands* (Broken Rekkids, Box 460402, San Francisco CA 94146) This CD is a compilation of J Church's EP's and compilation tracks. J Church are an incredible band. If you haven't them, check this out. The band features ex-Cringer members Gardner and punk rock god Lance. This is basically like Cringer but with more of a Jawbreaker influence. Still really poppy, but not like Green Day. Definitely buy this because it will save you the money of trying to track down all these cuts individually. Seems like this band releases something new somewhere every week! - Bob B.

JACOB'S MOUSE - *I'm Scared* (Frontier) I don't know what this brawny British trio have been listening to, but it certainly wasn't their first record, since this sounds nothing like that catchy Senseless Thingsish pop/punk. Instead you get distorted vocals, grinding chord changes, weird tempos, a few druggy Velvet Underground-type dirges, and abrasive metallic drone-rock with lots of electro effects, vox and guitars, all of which kind of remind me of Season To Risk, Paw, Blind Melon, and all those progressive-alternative metal bands from the midwest. - Jim T.

JESUS LIZARD - *Lash* (Touch & Go) These guys have their sound down and this combination of new songs and live cuts won't disappoint or, for that matter, surprise anyone. Personally I always much preferred the Lizard live show, where if you stood up front, you would get showered with David Yow's sweat as he was tumbling across the sea of hands above you (pleasant, eh?) But don't get me wrong, this is a good release; it's just that live is better. This is also available on vinyl as a triple 7 inch. - Des Jr.

KICKING GIANT - *Halo* (Loose Leaf) Kicking Giant are from the Beat Happening school of minimalist pop tunes. But this duo aren't childlike in the least. First of all, the fuller sound (bass, guitars, drums) suits them well, even in the lowest of lo-fi. With a who's who of the Love Rock movement helping out, KG belt out a whole bunch of songs here you'll be humming all week. - Jodi S.

KILL SYBIL - *Kill Sybil* (Empty) Is this what they play in your favorite college laundromat? A big disappointment after all the other great Empty releases. - J.Turri

KILLSWITCH - *Daisies...roses...happy days?* (PO Box 51051, Kalamazoo MI 49005) This is somewhat interesting, but it's nowhere near being commercial enough for the "alternative-rock" scene and not artistic or innovative enough for the indie scene. It reminds me a little of Pearl Jam minus the grunge, with a bit more rock 'n' roll edge to it. Maybe

this will find a home with AOR fans who want to crossover on the weekends. - Danny E.

KING KONG - *Funny Farm* (Drag City) Try to imagine Evan Dando fronting ■ less kitschy B-52's (it might help to take some strong hallucinogens first.) That will help a little in getting ■ handle on King Kong's lo-fi, funky hoedown groove. The whole record has ■ very off-the-cuff feel (lyrics included.) A great record to play while killing some time on ■ lazy Sunday afternoon. - Sal C.

KURBJAW - *Kurbjaw* (Changing World, Box 6223, East Brunswick NJ 08816) This would have been great ■ couple of years ago, but it still sounds pretty good: Basic hardcore with crunchy guitars, moshy parts, and heavy, throaty vocals. Worth a listen if you like old style NY HC. - Bob B.

THE LOVE INTEREST - "Bedazzled" EP (Invisible) Yet another new project from the ubiquitous Chris Connelly, this one featuring ex-Rapeman Dave Sims on bass. Not at all the industrial thrashathon I expected. Airy, dance-oriented funk with a decidedly Middle Eastern feel and great vocals from Mary Lynn Bowling. And finally there's ■ 12" out that justifies five different remixes of the same song (each are distinct and intriguing enough to merit repeated listens.) I hope this isn't a one shot deal ■ I'd love to hear a full album from these guys (and gal.) - Sal C.

LES THUGS - *As Happy As Possible* (Sub Pop) This is a great CD! Just like their last record - poppy stuff with lots of whoa's and ahh's in the chorus. Very uplifting. I would say it's one of the best things on Sub Pop. A definite buy! - Bob B.

LESS IS MORE - *Beach House Memories* (PO Box 410603,

San Francisco CA 94141) This isn't bad although ■ ■■ get annoying at times. Less Is More mix punk, funk, and all out weirdness. They are a powerful trio doing some goofy, fun stuff. It's nothing like the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The funk isn't very noticeable. Worth a listen. - Bob B.

LUNGFISH - *Rainbows From Atoms* (Dischord) A bit less heavy and dirge-y than their other stuff, but still quite good in its way. The long, wordy songs tend to become wallpaper if you don't sit and listen, which isn't exactly ■ bad thing if you think about it. "Abraham Lincoln" ■ ■ Simple Machines 7", and on rainy days, "Seek Sound Shelter" hits the spot. - Jodi S.

MR. THUMB - *Mr. Thumb* (Behemoth) I usually hate wah-wah pedals, but in the hands (or feet?) of Jhon Thumb, it's not just an annoying gimmick, it's ■ lethal weapon. Jhon's explosive guitar energy propels Mr. Thumb's first full-length release, providing the perfect pyrotechnics for Bil Weis' vocals. On the best cuts - "No Speak-No Wonder," "Circus," "Good Pil" - these guys make you believe that New Brunswick really could be the next Seattle. Jersey Beat's Dave Urbano plays bass in the combo, but this would still be one of the best local releases of the year even without one of our staffers on board. - Jhim Testa

MADDER ROSE - "Swim" EP (Seed) This 6-song EP starts off with a re-mix of the lovely "Swim" from the band's debut lp, rocks ■ little on the Jonathan Richman cover, "I Wanna Sleep In Your Arms," but for the most part finds this Hoboken quartet in a quiet, reflective mood. "Baby Gets High," "Z," "Amnesia" and "Take It Away" all have a tranquil, peaceful, almost soporific air, with Mary Lorson's exquisite vocals wafting over silky layers of guitars. - Jim T.



MAN...OR ASTROMAN?

Photo by Jim Testa

MAJORITY OF ONE - *2000 Years Of Indecision* (Doghouse) This was ■ big disappointment. I was hoping to hear stuff that sounded like the "Setting The Pace" EP. Instead they've traded their sound for one similar to Fugazi and other D.C. bands - typically emo, whiney vocals with weird and boring guitar stuff. Another great HC band has fallen from grace. - Bob B.

MAN OR ASTRO-MAN? - *Is It...Man or Astro-Man?* (Estrus) This Auburn, Alabama teen band plays surf instrumentals, and I give them ■ lot of credit - for young 'uns, they've listened to more old garage band records and shlocky B-movie theme songs than most couch potatoes twice their age. But even with ■ repertoire that includes monsters, spies, surf, and rockabilly twang, there's only so much you can do with surf instrumentals... - Jim T.

MEKONS - *Millionaire* (Quarterstick) Not surprisingly, the mighty Mekons have yet another winner with their latest release. This is a 5-song CD with gems like "He Beat Up His Boyfriend" from way back in 1982, plus three live songs, two of them from the liner notes describe ■ *The Mekons - The Movie*. Anyway, if you've never heard them before, this is the place to start: Listen to the Mekons and pretend the

British Invasion never ended. - Danny E.

THE MEICES *Greatest Bible Stories Ever Told* (Empty) The all-knowing Meices have just released their debut album and it's nothing short of a garage-rock lover's daydream. This one's got everything: Razor-sharp stops ala' Unsane or Helmet, angry thick power that crawls under your skin like Lubricated Goat or the Melvins, and speedy singalongs and catchy choruses like Gas Huffer or Rocket From The Crypt. In short, this has absolutely everything the punk rocker of the Nineties could possibly need, all summed up on with little disc with great cover art to boot. Long live retro. - Danny E.

MELVINS - *Houdini* (Atlantic) Some bands ■■■ never meant to sign to major labels. There's no way Atlantic will sell enough copies of ■ blatantly uncommercial release like *Houdini* to ever make a penny off this band. But the Melvins stay true to their Black Sabbath drone on much of this album, speeding things up suprisingly on almost-metal numbers like "Honey Bucket." We can only hope that when it comes time to pay the taxman and audit their advance, the Melvins aren't forced to break up as so many other cool indie bands have over the years. - Johnny P.



Photo by Michele Taylor

SMASHING PUMPKINS

MICKEY FINN - *3 On A Match* (Big Money, Box 2483 Loop Stn, Minneapolis MN 55402) I should really like this. A noisy 3-piece with predominantly female vocals. A lot more musical than, say, Janitor Joe. But once this sucker gets past the cover of "Shake Your Body" (here re-titled "Dance And Shout"), I can't help but find myself fading on the thing. It's good, it's just not that good. - Des Jr.

MINDFUNK - *Dropped* (Megaforce) This 11-song CD is filled with the most generic and boring mix of commercialized alternative garbage that I've ever heard. With Pat Dubar (from Uniform Choice) and Louis Svitek and John Monte (of M.O.D.), I expected more from this band. This is your basic mix of wannabe psychedelic whining vocals mixed in with boring solos that go nowhere. None of the songs stand out. The sad part is, I can see high school kids in their Anthrax and Ozzy t-shirts going crazy for this. - Bob B.

MONSTERLAND - *Destroy What You Love* (Seed) This gets off to ■ mediocre start on the first two tracks, but is smoking but the time it gets going. Laden with guitar-driven frenzy that walks ■ fine line between power and overpowering. Good shit to crank out loud. - Tom B.

MOTHERHEADBUG - *Zambodia* (Pow Wow) The long-awaited debut by New York's most insane band. Trying to describe them is like trying to catch ■ fly with chopsticks (what? you didn't ■■ *Karate Kid*?) but ■ semi-accurate attempt might go: Middle Eastern cum Oriental cum avant-jazz cum Cop Shoot Cop (who share ■ member or two with these guys.) It's full of weird percussion, it's ■ singer possessed by demons, it's a cellist and violinist alongside a girl banging on sheet metal. The circus-like atmosphere of their live show translates well here, although you'll still be missing out on

some of their intensity of seeing them in person. - Jodi S.

MOVING TARGETS - *Last Of The Angels* (Taang) Very Husker Du-style rock that doesn't damage its roots. Four songs altogether on this release; two new melodic tunes, ■ cover of Led Zep's "No Quarter," and ■ song called "Babble" which I have not figured out yet. - J.Turri

MY NAME - *Wet Hills & Big Wheels* (C/Z) Power pop punk. Those three words ■ the best way to describe My Name. They're very much like ALL's newer stuff. I really like the singer's voice, it's very clear and deep. But the music is missing something, the catchiness just isn't there. This isn't bad, but not great. Copy it from a friend, it's not worth getting caught stealing it. - Bob B.

MYSTERIOUS MATT MILLER - *Why Do They Hate Them So?* (Crud, 1935 S Plum Grove Rd, Palatine IL 60067) A man and his guitar spit out two slightly countryish tunes about love and broken hearts. Nothing noteworthy here, but his attitude is in the right place. - Tom B.

NAKED AGGRESSION - *Bitter Youth* (Broken) I really liked their first two EP's, but this is weak in comparison. If you haven't heard Naked Aggression, you should check them out. Their music is very hard driven, with angry, political lyrics, with high pitched vocals which make the band, in my opinion. Kirsten's vocals are great. Even though these songs ■ slower and not ■ catchy as previous releases, they're still good songs, and this is still worth picking up. - Bob B.

THE OBVIOUS - *Rock And Roll In The Big City* (I Wanna) This CD collects this Dayton combo's earlier EP and ■ material. They're ■ punky garage band with clever lyrics, honest songwriting, and clever, punchy vocals. "The Underground" is a great song about every struggling band's plight, "Stage Fright" is the best song about this affliction since The Band's. - Jim T.

OFFSPRING - *Ignition* (Epitaph) I have to say I was somewhat dismayed ■ first when I turned on song one to screams of "AHHH FUCK!" and ■ subsequent song about ■ called "Session." But then I said, "well, it is from L.A. after all, and they can't really help it," so I tuned out the lyrics and listened to the music - which, truth to tell, did rock. The Offspring have been inspiring bands around Southern California for a few years now (popularly known as offspring of the Offspring,) and although the hardcore melodies ■ there, I'll admit it's fairly difficult to pinpoint any obvious Bad Religion ripoffs (a cliché that all Epitaph

bands must endure.) Fans of SoCal melodic, 80's styled punk rock ■ well as previous fans of the Offspring will not be disappointed in this release. - Danny E.

PAIN TEENS - *Destroy* ■ *Lover* (Trance Syndicate, PO Box 49771, Austin TX 78765) As a whole, I'm not knocked out by an lp's worth of Pain Teens but some of these songs are pretty happening. "Cool Your Power" starts things off with its corkscrew riff and ■ hooky chorus. Then comes "Prowling," which to me is the best PT song ever. "RU 486" is a lush pop-styled ode to the French abortion pill, and the sampled collages "Sexual Anorexia" and "Shock Treatment" show that these folks can manipulate tapes with great imagination. However, beyond that I quit paying attention. - Des Jr.

PAPER TULIPS - *Bakers Dozen* (Flipside, PO Box 60790, Pasadena CA 91116) An L.A. three-piece who have a good sound that doesn't remind me of anybody offhand (which is cool.) This lp, to me, doesn't have a lot of staying power, but "Heavy Everything," "The Deep In," and "Onion Creek Parkway" ■ memorable tunes. Not bad and I'd like to see them live. - Des Jr.

PARASITES - *Punchlines* (Shredder) The Parasites have long been an underrated band, so I wish everyone and their grandma's were forced to listen to this. This CD is one of the best I've heard in ■ while, great pop/punk with ■ Ramones influence. This CD includes released and unreleased vocals but every tune is great, from the smooth vocals to the big rock 'n' roll beat. - Bob B.

PENNYWISE - *Unknown Road* (Epitaph) This is incredible. I thought that their last lp ■ great, but this is better. Pennywise haven't lost steam, they still pump out the greatest punk rock - great anthems, catchy singalongs, and it's all fresh. I used to think of them as Bad Religion wannabes but after listening to this, I now believe differently. This is one record you must get. Buy! Buy! Buy! - Bob B.

PHLEG CAMP - *Ya Red Fair Scratch* (Cargo) I didn't like this at all. The only way I can describe it is "raw emo." Lots of heavy guitars and crunchy bass, very progressive. The songs go on forever. They don't really stick in your mind either. Check it out for the musicianship if you're into that, but I'd look for it used. - Bob B.

PISS FACTORY - *Piss Factory* (Relativity) Cool new NY band featuring Lizzie Avondet on vocals, the closest thing to Patti Smith I've heard since Thalia Zadek launched Come a few years ago. The band sets up a nice groove behind her



Will the real Take That please stand up? New York bar band (above) or U.K. prettyboys?



pinched, emphatic vocals, with grinding guitars creating ■ thick layer of feedback, fuzz, and drone. The name comes from Patti Smith's first single, and surprisingly (assuming you know how much I revere Patti Smith), this group actually manages to live up to it. - Jim T.

THE QUEERS - *Love Songs For The Retarded* (Lookout) This sounds so much like Screeching Weasel that it'd be easy to assume these New Hampshire punkers just ripped off every idea they have from Ben Weasel, except that Joe Queer has been doing this kind of stuff for ■ good ten years. We do owe Ben a debt of gratitude though for bringing this band to Lookout's attention and getting them their first real national exposure. So if you like that bratty, whiney pop/punk thing with the screaming teen guitar riffs and funny lyrics, check these guys out. - Jim T.

RED HOUSE PAINTERS - *Red House Painters* (4AD/Sony) Their debut EP was wonderfully bare & moody but this double LP is even better. The songs are fleshed out more, with more noise hiding in the background than you'd think (or even pick up on first listen.) Each song is like ■ confessional, or one side of a conversation, drawing on remembrances of things past, relationships, and loss. Emotional, tender, heartfelt - every adjective you can think of fits these songs somewhere. - Jodi S.

Primarily barren, acoustic arrangements subtly supplemented by gentle electric instruments, arranged carefully as not to detract from the vocals, which are at the same time depressing without being brooding. - Johnny Puke

RICHIES - *Don't Wanna Know If You Are Lonely* (We Bite America) First of all, this band is a three-piece, and who can resist a trio? On the other hand, they're from Germany. What you get on this 6 song mini-CD is three covers and three originals. The Richies cover Husker Du, the Bangles, and Les Sheriff (in French, yet!) with finesse, and the originals ■ quite Ramonesy in an Exploding White Mice vein. Pick this up and you'll soon be singing the "La La" part of "Elvis" in your sleep. - J.Turri

ROYAL TRUX - *Dogs And Cats* (Drag City, PO Box 476867, Chicago IL 60647) I've never done heroin and after listening to this LP, I don't think I'll ever need to. This duo gives you faltering, nodding out Stones boogage overlaid with the wails of the damned. Haunting (haunted) and beautifully pathetic, this album puts me near ■ mood that I haven't felt since the first time I listened to Joy Division's "Closer," which is to say it's ■ true bummeR vibe. I'm just not sure whether to praise the convincing opiate haze this creates, or pray for a successful rehabilitation for all involved. This is supposed to be a good review. - Des Jr.

RUDER THAN YOU - *Big Step* (Foo-Foo, PO Box 31202, Philadelphia PA 19147) This ska band writes some catchy, danceable songs, and branches out from the genre a bit with harder rock and even some hip hop. Some good jumping rock and roll here for your next frat party, even ■ you're not usually a ska freak, which is why I always said, "Philadelphia's okay if you like saxophones." - Jim T.

ST. JOHNNY - *High As A Kite* (Caroline) At first I was prepared for another Caroline loser, but on third listen, St. Johnny set in with lots of buried hooky guitar layers. The production has a good live feel, while the singing almost verges on generic college rock (like, Tom Petty) but it escapes that pitfall. "Track 9" is my favorite. Pretty catchy

stuff without getting too pop (like Wax), and the bass and guitar blend nicely too. A B+. - Dave U.

SAM BLACK CHURCH - *Sam Black Church* (Taang) This ■ pretty good, sort of like older Nirvana and ■ few other Sub Pop bands, but with ■ more metal feel. The songs are all good but they lack individuality. I really like the vocals, though - sort of a yelling-while-gargling razor blades thing. Really good bass lines and decent guitar riffs. This is worth checking out. - Bob B.

CASEY SCOTT - *Creep City* (Signal/Capitol) Any woman who proposes equipping Barbie dolls with guns wins a soft spot in my heart. That said, Casey Scott is an East Village multi-faceted artist who initially came from Oregon. Her personal bouts of angst and inner turmoil spill across this disk in songs about suicide, abortion, and romantic breakups. I can't say I found the music pleasant to listen to (although Casey has ■ good vocal range,) but I did like the aspects of suffering that were covered. Whatever the hell this is, ■ least it came across as honest. - Tom B.

SEAM - *The Problem With Me* (Touch ■ Go) I really enjoyed this record (and it really was a record, since Touch & Go still sends us vinyl promos). Seam betray their North Carolina roots (Mac from Superchunk was their original drummer) with ■ definite Superchunk influence, but Seam's songs aren't "catchy" ■ much as they are melodic, meandering along at slacker tempo with ■ pleasingly droning ambience. A nice record to put on in the background while you're puttering around with something else. - Jim T.

SEERSUCKER - *Pushing Rope* (Sky) This shit is amped, baby, fucking amped. Sliding along twisty-slick Georgia clay backroads ■ 120 mph damn near flyin' off the curves and shouting "Yee haw!" all the fucking way. Hell yeah! Let's do it again! Get this, see them live. - Des Jr.

SHADES APART - *Neon* (Skene, PO Box 4522, St Paul MN 55104) Kinda slow, groovy post-hardcore from this South Jersey trio. I can remember Shades Apart being quite the rage ■ few years ago. They sort of remind me of guitarry stuff like Jawbox or Alloy. This is the kind of disc you want to pop in when hitting the metaphorical hay. Worth ■ spin if you dig the DC thang. - J.Turri

SHORTY - *Thumb Days* (Cargo) I didn't really care for this. This whole ■ of Tar and Jawbox styled bands bores me. All the songs sound alike, they all have ■ heavy rocking sound with annoyingly scratchy vocals. - Bob B.

SLOPPY SECONDS - *Knock Yer Block Off* (Taang) Fourteen new anthems chock full o' catchy hooks. Perfect for bubblegum-snappin' and toe tappin' and pogoing in your neighbor's flowerbeds. Ingenuity in the lyrics dept. is ■ big plus here also. This one rocks the whole way thru and doesn't drag a bit. - J.Turri

SMALL FACTORY - *I Do Not Love You* (Spin Art) Small Factory are one of those bands that can yank you out of the deepest depressions. It's not that they're terminally happy either, it's because they ■ so gosh-darn endearing. Little boy and little girl voices over bittersweet pop songs. "What Angels Say" is ■ song to fall in love with. - Jodi S. This reminds me of a depressing but matured Beat Happening, if you can imagine that. Excellent biting-cold, sweater-wearing, snowy day music, worth picking up if you can find it. - Danny E.



Photo by Jim Testa

QUEERS

SMASHING PUMPKINS - *Siamese Dream* (Virgin) - Chicago's Smashing Pumpkins have had to live with the curse of being "the next big thing" almost since the day they crawled out of a garage back in Urbana, Illinois and released their first independent single. I've never really understood why. The Pumpkins' fast songs might offer the same cathartic release as the sledgehammer riffs of college-radio faves like Helmet and Nirvana, but the Smashing Pumpkins couldn't be more unlike those bands. Nirvana unleashed punk's potential and turned "Smells Like Teen Spirit" into a rallying cry for an entire unnamed generation. The Smashing Pumpkins' songs reach inward; Corgan's obsessively tidy guitar textures and psychedelically muted vocals enshroud the listener in a claustrophobic web of tightly knit sounds. To put it another way, Nirvana's songs make you want to punch the air and scream your lungs out. A half hour of Smashing Pumpkins and you're ready to curl up into the fetal position and spend the rest of the night hiding under the covers. - Jim T.

SOMETIMES SWEET SUSAN - *Fuse* (Big Deal/Futurist) This relatively new band from Wisconsin has managed to land touring slots with the likes of Soundgarden and Soul

Asylum. Distorted, fuzzy guitar and occasional feedback show up throughout this Steve Albini-produced endeavor. According to the Aquarian, the name of the band was the title of the movie that Robert DeNiro took Cybil Sheppard to in *Taxi Driver*. - Tom B.

SOULHAT - *Outdebox* (Spindletop/Epic) Austin is a funny place. I love going there, they've got a great music scene, and yet whenever one of the bands that's worshipped there gets signed, the music always turns out to be so ordinary. Soulhat play country-western pop similar to Minneapolis' Jayhawks but without the big hooks and with a singer who sounds a lot like a young Todd Rundgren. Okay, you know, but this is the band that wins "Best Rock Band" at the Austin Music Awards, I'd hate to hear the runners-up. - Jim T.

JON SPENCER BLUES EXPLOSION - *Extra Width* (Mata-dor) Along with the new Big Chief, *Extra Width* is the funkier record you can buy this month. Kicking off with the aptly named "Afro," the Blues Explosion takes us on a journey through the bowels of the blues. It's a great trip, especially when Jon sounds one shade less than Elvis himself. The driving song of the year goes to "Big Road," wherein, after declaring his need for a Roy Rogers roast beef sandwich, Jon calls out the names of the rest stops on the New Jersey turnpike. (Who was John Fenwick, anyway?) Even better than their Caroline debut. - Jodi S.

SPINANES - *Manos* (Sub Pop) The chemistry is chilling between Scott (drums) and Rebecca (guitar). I imagined what a bass could do with these songs. It's the notes that not played that make this unit great. The songs on *Manos* really excellent. Rebecca Gates swings out some fairly nice melodies and plays terrific guitar too. Some bands can make it work with only two people. Not many do it well the Spinanes. - Dave U.

SPORE - *Spore* (Taang) Spore is the kind of wonderful bacteria that has been growing in this nation - noisy-heavy, thick with bass grooves. Consider Spore as a date with Alice Donut and Janitor Joe out shopping for wah wah pedals. I like it, fear gods feedback and bleeding gums. - Dave U.

SQUATWEILER - *Full Bladder* (Huel Records, PO Box 21134, Winston Salem NC 27120) I used to know a lot of people from Winston-Salem but they were all in the dB's. These guys don't sound like that and they don't sound like Superchunk or any other of the emerging Merge bands. The big thing here is Haydee Thompson's voice, which commands every track. She has this big, playful yelp that's sort of like Kate Pierson (of the B 52's) crossed with Poly Styrene (of X Ray Spex.), and when she's screaming and frugging and freaking out, Squatweiler make a lot of bouncy, fun punk noise. But the songwriting is wildly uneven and Thompson too often lapses into a sort of cheese-metal chanteuse mode, which I can do without. I hope they start touring. I'd definitely like to see how this holds together, but they should really think about imposing a little more structure and self-control into the songs. There's nothing wrong with Squatweiler that a good three-minute pop tune wouldn't cure. - Jim T.

STEEL WOOL - *Simple Men Who Like Working With Their Hands* (Empty) You can't really go wrong with too much on Empty Records, Steel Wool being no exception and very reminiscent of the lo-fi, rough edged garage-rock/60's punk

that's winning over hearts everywhere these days. This will be right up your alley ■ you're into the Estrus garage sound, i.e. Fallouts, New Bomb Turks, Meices, etc. This is an excellent example of why I'm so excited about where indie music is going these days, cutting through the crap and finally recognizing the genius of our underground forefathers. - Danny E.

SUGARSMACK - *Exploder* (Invisible) I can't really say much to compliment this record, it's hard to tell if the band is trying to experiment with all kinds of music & sounds, or merely making ■ personalized smorgasbord of what's selling on the Billboard charts. About half the songs are worthwhile, but there's ■ ridiculous Ween ripoff and a couple that are pathetic white-boy hardcore raps ala Rage Against The Machine. If you're interested in Invisible Records, you can do much better. - Danny E.

SUPERBALL 63 - *Loadstar* (Big Money) Husker Du meets Cheap Trick meets Black Sabbath meets everybody on Touch & Go sorta sums it up. There's simply no way to describe the band's awesome, booming, bottomy, bassy sound without hearing it though, so I would heartily suggest you go pick up ■ copy of this CD, turn the volume up a couple of notches, and dive right in for yourself. - Jim T.

TAKE THAT - *Take That* (Art Fist, PO Box 732, Amityville NY 11701) Take That are denizens of the downtown club scene chronicled elsewhere in this issue who make cheesey bar band rock 'n' roll (recorded for this album on a 4-track,) combining elements of progressive 70's rock, rockabilly, and punk. Their presskit is a lot more entertaining, ■ it chronicles the life & death struggle of these guys against the U.K. Take That, a disco bubblegum teenybopper sensation over there with ■ string of Top 10 singles and a deal with RCA over here. In ■ battle of the bands, patriot that I am, I'll side with New York's Take That, although I'm afraid our guys won't stand ■ chance in the swimsuit competition. - Jim T.

TAR - *Toast* (Touch & Go) Tar fall into that middle ground that lies between Helmet's metallic intensity and Jawbox's melodicism. All three bands stress rigid tempos and intricate arrangements, but Tar ■ neither ■ brutal ■ the former nor ■ catchy ■ the latter. As ■ result, I can only recommend this to folks who ■ already turned on to their one of those bands. There's ■ lot to be said for this budding little sound-scene, but Tar, ■ good ■ they can be, are just not the best. - Sal C.

TILT - *Play Cell* (Lookout) Lookout's done it again. Another Godlike release. Could this be their next Green Day? Possibly. This is a little different from their debut EP, a little more commercial. Tilt have ■ sound all their own. Cinder Block's vocals are deep and smooth, and she can actually sing. The music itself is very catchy but I can see this getting some college radio play, because it's also pretty raw, like more East Bay bands. Ex-Crimpspine Pete is also in the band. They are soon to be the kings of pop punk, so get it before it's a collector's item. - Bob B.

TRENCHMOUTH - *Inside The Future* (Skene, Box 4522, St Paul MN 55104) Trenchmouth have ■ unique sound with many different influences, although the main one is the DC/Dischord sound. ■ changes a lot throughout this CD, though. At one point they're fast, then suddenly change to very slow, melodic blues. This is definitely worth ■ listen. - Bob B.

TRIPPING FACE - *Tripping Face* CD-5 (Alibi Prods, Box 1326, Patchogue NY 11772) This power-trio hails from Montclair, NJ, not exactly known ■ the metal capital of the world, but Tripping Face do a good job on this 4-song CD introducing themselves as ■ tuneful and dynamic ■ presence on the local scene. Songs like "Had My Fun" and "Not That Easy" are both catchy (in the Poison/Motley Crue sense) and heavy, and I'm ■ sucker for any drummer who ■ ■ cowbell as much as TF's Brian Bergen. - Jim T.

TROTSKY ICEPICK - *Carpetbomb & Riff* (SST) I've heard ■ lot about this band but they didn't live up to the hype. Very monotone vocals with drawn-out, moody rock. None of the songs really go anywhere. - Bob B.

TVTV\$ - *Rap Music Is Killing America* (Flipside, Box 60790, Pasadena CA 91116) I've been wanting to check these guys out for ■ while and it ■ worth the wait. This CD is really good. All five songs stand on their own. The title song gets ■ bit old after ■ while, but the rest ■ incredible. I don't want to classify them as pop punk because they ■ beyond that - goofy but intelligent lyrics with great music make this a must-buy. I'm pissed that I missed them when they played live near me last year. - Bob B.

VERLAINES - *Way Out Where* (Slash) Underneath the la la melodies and midwestern, almost English accented vocals is a Dumptruck/Big Dipper song with "distorted melodic guitar" out front. The V's have 80's Syndrome, which is what happens when you take the garage out of rock, and everything sounds like stuff they play on WHTG. - Dave U.

X-TAL - *Good Luck* (Alias) This, the fifth release from these SF Bay ■ boys, shows definite signs of musical growth. Although more polished than their 1992 release *Everything Crash*, this EP throws forth an expressive instrumental sound with ■ folk undertow. Songs of dreams not achieved, an anti-religious bent - all just trying to say, "hey, something wrong here!" - Tom B.

DU HUSKERS - *The Twin Cities Replay Zen Arcade* (Synapse, 2304 Grand Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55405) As the title indicates, this album is an ingenious compilation of Minneapolis/St Paul garage and punk bands redoing the classic Husker Du album, *Zen Arcade*. As might be expected, the finest interpretations are pounded out with the strength they deserve from Flour, Arcwelder, Hammerhead, Vertigo, Walt Mink, and the mighty Janitor Joe. The big surprises, however, were Teenage Larvae with "The Tooth Fairy And The Princess," and especially TVBC's version of "Recurring Dreams" (which rocked my house for days.) This is your chance to hear some soon-to-be-classic bands doing classic Husker Du the way it should be done. A must for all Husker fans and for anyone interested in Minneapolis garage-punk as well. - Danny E.

CAN YOU SEE IF YET? Invisible Records Compilation (Invisible, PO Box 16008, Chicago IL 60616) Not much can be said about Invisible Records that hasn't been said before: Lots of scary sounds here, with Dogzilla sounding like the band out of place. The rest is ■ messy mix of techno, industrial, and gothic that could easily replace ■ David Lynch soundtrack or take over as the theme music for MTV's Liquid Television. I was surprised to see the Evil Mothers here, an old cross-dressing industrial/punk band I used to go see in San Antonio. Anyway, suffice it to say that if you don't already have a fondness for the "Chicago sound," this isn't going to sway your vote, but if you're

looking for "scary music to have nightmares to," look no further. - Danny E.

ACHTUNG CHICAGO ZWEI (Underdog, Box 14182, Chicago IL 60614) The second compilation of Chicago punk bands from the Underdog collective has some very good tracks and a lot of mediocre ones, although the CD also includes Vol. 1 with some very rare stuff that makes this a worthwhile addition to your collection anyway. The *Vindictives* (when Ben Weasel was still in the band), Gauge, 8-Bark, Los Crudos, Smoking Popes, and Trenchmouth all turn in tasty tunes. - Jim T.

D.I.Y. - Benefit For CKCU FM Cassette (CKCU FM, 517 Unicentre, Carleton University, Ottawa Canada K1S 5B6) I'll just quote from the liner notes: "60 minutes of LIVE music by 8 bands, recorded off the soundboard in glorious MONO!" Actually, the sound isn't bad on most tracks (it fades off on a few,) and what you get here are eight relatively unknown Canadian punk bands (at least, unknown here in the U.S.), most of whom are pretty good, grungy garage-punk: Ripcordz, Lockjaw, Wad, and Moist Boys will all get my \$5 when they make their inevitable Southern pilgrimage to ABC No Rio. And you should send five bucks for this tape anyway and support this cool radio station, which happens to be the home of Jersey Beat's ace photographer, Shawn Scallen. - Jim T.

WADE FREE VANCOUVER - Compilation (Club Grotesque, Box 52023, No Vancouver BC V7J 3T2 CANADA) I usually get scared when I see comps with bands I've never heard of before, but after listening to this one, my view has changed. This CD was really good. I hope some labels puts out some of these undiscovered bands. I really liked Brandnewunit, Sick Sick Yeah!, and Strain. Each band stands out as an individual, which is nice and sort of the purpose of this comp. Get it, wade free, there's no reason for fast forwarding through this collection. Vancouver obviously has some great bands. Worth finding. - Bob B.

BOOKS

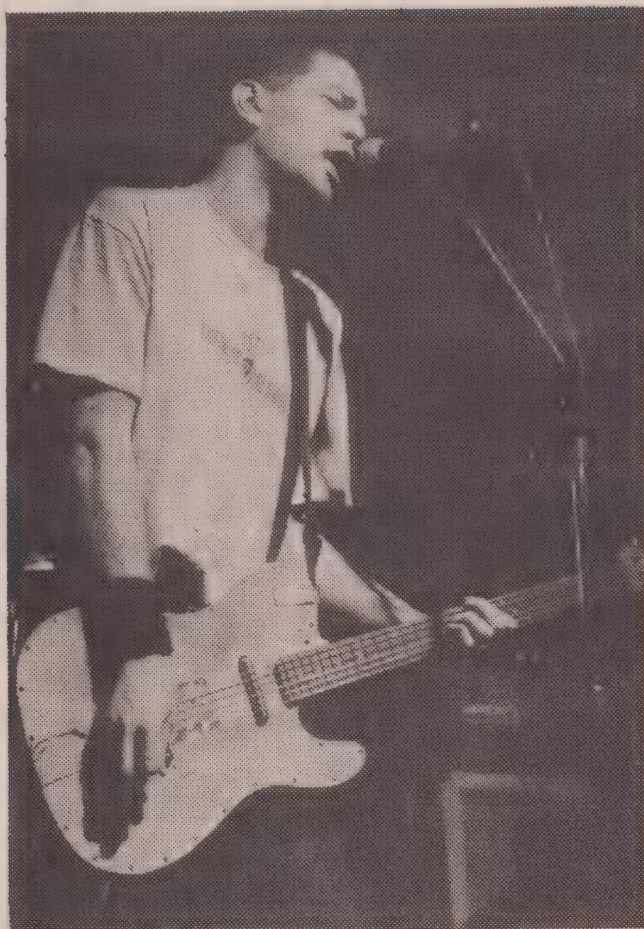
NETWORKING IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY by Jim Clevo and Eric Olsen (Rockpress) Every year at every CMJ convention or New Music Seminar I've been to, there are always a few people from bands who blew \$300 or more on the registration fees, diligently queuing up at every panel to ask the most basic questions. Now, thanks to Jim Clevo and Eric Olsen, you can get all the same answers for fourteen bucks.

The book consists of interviews with the people who actually do the moving and shaking in the music business - managers, lawyers, club bookers, label execs, radio deejays, fanzine editors, and even the nice folks who run CMJ, NMS, and SXSW. Olsen and Clevo know how it all works, from the grassroots to the penthouse suites, and they know exactly what kind of information young bands need to get their foot in the door. This is a terrific sourcebook for anyone looking for that first big break, and it's heavily annotated with usable names and addresses of people who can help you. - Jim T.

COME AS YOU ARE - The Story of Nirvana by Michael Azerrad (Doubleday) Rock critic Michael Azerrad had done a terrific job of researching the lives of everyone who's been in Nirvana, and this biography is rich with the kind of details that's usually only lavished on the lives of presidents and generals. Of course, Nirvana has only been famous for about two years, so it's questionable whether we actually need to know the make of Kurt Cobain's first guitar, or what days of the week Nirvana practiced in 1989. But I'll admit it, I couldn't put this down. As my friend Jim DeRogatis put it, it's like picking up a fanzine and finding a really good tour diary. The details may be mundane but it's still a lot of fun to read. - Jim T.

VIDEO

The Jim Rose Circus Sideshow (American Records/Video) Yes, it's the same collection of geeks, misfits, and oddballs who made *Lollapalooza II* so disgusting, videotaped at a show in Seattle in front of a lot of people with very strong stomachs. See a man swing heavy weights from a nipple. See another guy eat razor blades and push a condom in his mouth and out his nose. These double-jointed, iron-stomached human oddities have been carny staples since the 1800's, and they're still fascinating (in a repulsive sort of way.) - Jim T.



TAR

Photo by Shawn Scallen

FANZINE REVIEWS

ANNOYANCE #4 \$1 (83 Hillcrest Rd, Warren NJ 07059) Small format zine, short interviews with Affirmative Action, Porcelain Boys, Superball 63, comics, reviews

ARTCORE #8 \$3 (1 Aberdulais Rd, Gabalfa, Cardiff, CF4 2PH WALES UK) Great graphics and interviews with some unlikely bands (given the zine's based in Wales) like Jack Scratch, Pink Lincolns, Society Gone Mad.

BABY SUE Vol 4 No. 1 \$2 (PO Box 1111, Decatur GA 30031) Just bits and pieces of a slightly offcenter psyche: a guide to yard sales, top ten grocery lists, comix, poetry, and a satire of 12-step self-help programs.

BLISS #4 \$1 (PO Box 25665, Tamarac FL 33320) Proving the dictum that there's a fanzine about everything somewhere, here's a born-again Christian punkzine. There's a talk with a surfer dude turned minister, "How To Spot A Cult," a piece on the Biblical book of Noah, and the question of the month is "If God is so loving, why is there so much pain and suffering in the world." (You'll have to send for the zine to read the answer.) There's also an interview with a Christian punk band from Seattle. Amen.

BLOOD TIES #1 \$2 (PO Box 7538, Langley Park MD 20787) Lots of photos & interviews with thrashy bands like Sick Of It All, Worlds Collide, Clutch, Mayday, plus tattoo and graffiti art.

CHAIRS MISSING # Mr. Suit \$3.75 (PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497) Scottso just keeps banging these babies out. This is the zine whose every issue is named after a Wire song and always features insightful interviews and some interesting extras. This one's got Muffs, B.O.X., Ed Hall, an eyewitness account of G.G. Allin's last show, and some Brad Kohler artwork.

CHANGE ZINE #2 \$2 (% Pat West, Trinity College #904, Hartford CT 06106) The "Violence" issue, with quotable quotes from a panoply of punk scene VIP's on the subject, plus Rain Like The Sound Of Trains, Worlds Collide, Janitor Joe. Comes with an excellent 7" featuring Ricochet, Bob Evans, and Smackhead (the editor's band.)

CHAOS INTO POWER #8 \$2 (Doug Brunell, PO Box 842, Quakertown PA 18951) One of those messy punk-rock @narchy zines that asks questions like "Do Cops Need Leashes" and "Have you ever used semen for toothpaste?" There's also an interview with an incarcerated mental patient, prankster George Hayduke (this interview could be a prank for all I know, since I've never heard of George Hayduke,) zine reviews, and lots of other stuff.

CONSUMABLE #1 \$2 (PO Box 202, Kendall Park NJ 08824) Kind of a wide-ranging first issue, with a New Brunswick scene report, a techno column by our Mick Hale, a full-page review of Reigndance's debut lp, an interview with Meat Beat Manifesto, and so on. Nicely laid out with good writing. One to watch.

DRONE #1 \$2 (1800 Market St #69, San Francisco CA 94102) Small-format zine dedicated to disco, techno, and dance music. Moby, Cybersonic, reviews, photos. Nice job, looking forward to more of these.

FOREVER & A DAY #6 \$1 (1912 Electric Ave, Bellingham WA 98226) One of those "perzines" in which the editor bewails her meaningless existence in between band interviews and photos (in this issue, Jawbox).

FOSTER CHILD #14 \$2 (7635 Marcy Ct, Glen Burnie MD 21060) Well-written and thoughtful interviews and reviews, this time out Poison Idea, Rocket From The Crypt and Vacant Lot get the once over. Always a good read.

GENETIC DISORDER #10 \$2 (PO Box 151362, San Diego CA 92175) A nice mix of local San Diego stuff and national bands, and getting better all the time. Interviews with Face To Face, Screeching Weasel, a loser's guide to Lakeside, CA, and some funny extras.

HOLIDAY #4 \$2 (4428 Wildwood, Dallas TX 75231) Lots of spirit in this zine, even if it does have yet another Worlds Collide interview, along with VIA and Engage, very personal interviews and editorials.

HOUSE O' PAIN #10 \$3 (PO Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212) One of my favorite zines at the moment, always lots of read, great photos, information about the Nashville scene, and it comes with a compilation 7" of local bands (Lethargic, Floor, Canibal Holiday and Teen Idols.) This ish' has Jawbreaker, Mudhoney, Green Day, My Name, Brainiac, Hammerhead, and lots more.

THE I HATE PEOPLE GAZETTE #6 \$1 (% Kevin Person, 5708 Mansion Blvd, Pennsauken NJ 08109) Another "perzine," kind of like flipping through someone's diary or the little notes you doodle to yourself in your notebook when your mind's wandering. Intermittently fascinating and self-indulgent, messy punk layouts.

IN CROWD #5 \$2 (PO Box 15951, Clearwater, FL 34629) I met the editor of this little zine on my Florida vacation and liked it so much I asked him to write for Jersey Beat. This issue has interviews with Screeching Weasel, Load, Pink Lincolns, Alcohol Funnycar, and Bugout Society, plus, and I quote, "other anecdotes that'll make you puke from your nose with laughter."

INERTIA #1 \$2 (Karl King, PO Box 1330 Hagersville Ontario NOA IHO Canada) Editor Karl opened up his zine to bands and other zine editors from Ontario, so this is full of anecdotes, how-to's, editorials, and advertising for lots of Canadian punk stuff.

INFINITE ONION #8 \$1 (PO Box 263, Colorado Springs CO 80901) Sort of a mini-Profane Existence - lots of ranting and raving from an



anarchist point of view on a wide variety of subjects, in small print with smudgy graphics.

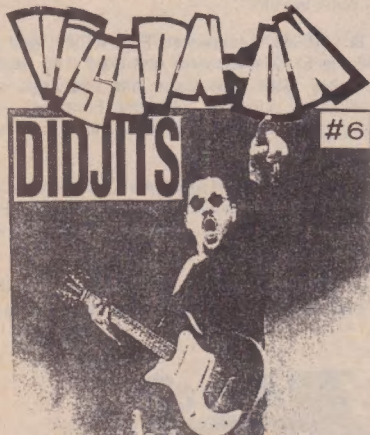
INTERMISSION PHOTO ZINE #3 \$2 (201 E 12 St #403, New York NY 10003) Another great collection of photos by Justine DeMetrick, many from ABC No Rio but just as many from her frequent road trips (including Berkeley/East Bay in this issue). The text is full of personal angst about Justine's struggle to find herself as a woman, a photographer, and a free-thinking person in the ridiculously stereotyped and contradictory punk scene.

LANDSLIDE #4 \$2 (Craig Henry, 1500 Hazel Ave, Chesapeake VA 23325) Punk bands and political thoughts, including Policy Of Three and Demise (that's the punk part,) thoughts on Thoreau and straight edge (that's the political part.)

MURTAUGH #10 \$2 (Mike Clark, 137 Emerson Pl, Brooklyn NY 11205) Still the best zine around named after a baseball player. This issue has lots of the editor's strident opinions, a Superchunk interview, poetry, photos, comix, and reviews.

MY GOD SHAVES #1 \$1.50 (Corey Kittrell, 603 Liberty Pike, Franklin TN 37064) Interviews with bands and personal stories. The personal stories are the best, especially editor Corey's recollections of struggles with family, friends, and his own racial identity (as a black kid who "passed" for white in the punk scene.)

OCULUS #4 (PO Box 148, Hoboken NJ 07030) No single issue price, subscriptions are free with a \$5 "S&H" charge. This is pretty much what you'd expect the punker scions of Hoboken's literary set to do in the way of a fanzine. Gorgeous layouts, witty and intellectual reviews and good solid interviews with a diverse selection of bands: X, Giant Sand, Shrimboat, Biohazard, Sheep On Drugs, and more.



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OH YOUR HAIR IS BEAUTIFUL TONIGHT #1 \$1 (151 First Ave Box A, New York NY 10003) The editor will have moved by the time you read this so I'm giving the Alternative Press & Radio Council p.o. box and we'll forward any mail. This perzine is by my Seattle pen pal Joel DeGraff of the band Saidchild. (see demo reviews) and is mostly poetry and short stories, illustrated by photos and simple drawings.

PATCHWORK #2 \$2 (Heric Duenas, 4323 Normal Ave #15, Los Angeles, CA 90029) Lots of photos and interviews with some familiar names (Jawbox, Insted, Downcast, Undertow), nicely put together although the copying on mine was difficult to read and the print was a little too small.

RAPID FIRE #11 \$2 (RD 2, Box 3370, Bristol VT 05443) 52 big pages with lots of different stuff - motorcycles, comics, reviews, a piece on a hardcore unity fest, a different take on the rave scene, and a funny piece on "Why I Won't Go See Rick Wakeman." Nice layouts that are easy on the eyes, too.

SECOND GUESS #7 \$2 (PO Box 9382, Reno NV 89507) I was in bed with the flu when this came and really enjoyed reading it cover to cover. A Cometbus-type zine based on the editor's travel diaries and personal observations, a Screeching Weasel interview, a Charles Bukowski short story, and all sorts of other goodies.

STINKFACE #3 \$1.50 (14610 Borgman, Oak Park MI 48237) Pretty much your average punk zine done on a MAC, but what it lacks in originality, it makes up for in spirit. There's a gung ho editorial, a DIY piece on fanzining, and pieces on Babes In Toyland, Fluid, GG Allin, MDC, and Lollapalooza '93.

THORAZINE #3 \$3 (PO Box 571562, Houston TX 77257) A big professional-looking fanzine that still has its heart in the punk zine. Interviews with Cop Shoot Cop, Helmet, X, Ed Hall, No FX, comics, reviews, news, fiction, and lots more. Well worth the dough.

TIFF #3 \$2 (PO Box 97009, 149 Roncesvalles Ave, Toronto M6R 3B3 CANADA) This is the place where computer freaks meet punk rock and

the result is terrific graphics and layouts, eye-catching photos (courtesy of Rob Ben of Robzine fame,) and text that covers everything from computer bulletin boards and laser fonts to an interview with the art director of Dirt (Sassy's punk-boy spinoff.)

UNDERDOG ZINE #5 \$1 (PO Box 14182, Chicago IL) The literary arm of the mighty Underdog punkrock collective. This issue has some steamy sex pieces, including Glen Herman's blind date from hell and another young man's day job in a whorehouse, helping the women "practice" servicing a client's fantasies. Plus recipes, humor, an interview with the Bollweevils, and "other cool shit."

VILLAGE NOIZE #15 \$2.50 (48-54 213 St, Bayside NY 11364) An Iggy Pop interview is the centerpiece of this issue, along with lots of short pieces on other cool bands and interviews. Well written, really nice layouts, even a little splash of color on the glossy cover. I'm jealous.

VINYL HELL #1 \$2 (1870 No. Vermont Ave. #506, Los Angeles CA 90027) A rambling and disjointed tour through vinyl junk piles, with reviews of totally obscure and impossible-to-find old records that the editors feel somehow compelled to write about. I don't get the point since you can't find this stuff anymore but archivists and Kix readers might enjoy this.

VISION ON #6 \$2 (27 Springbank Croft, Holmfirth, West Yorkshire HD7 1LW ENGLAND) Another U.K. fanzine full of American punk bands (Didjits, Down By Law, Monomen, Polvo, even Garden Variety) plus a few U.K. groups and reviews. Cool photos.

WHAT IF...? #1 \$1 (PO Box 2, New Haven CT 06501) Concentration on the Hartford punk scene plus an interview with a tattoo artist.

WILLIAM WANTS A DOLL #3 \$1 (Arielle Greenberg, 105 Patton Blvd, New Hyde Park NY 11040) This is probably as good an example of the riot grl sensibility as you're going to find. Lots of zine reviews, an expose of what it's like to be a Sassy intern (according to the writer, worthless), interviews with the editor's grandma, fashion tips...

WHAT, ME WORRY? #3 #2 (J. Turri, 1013 Ridge St, Freeland PA 18224) Farside interview, a tour of beautiful Freeland, PA, some reviews, and a comic with a lot of violence in it. Cool.

X-ILE #2 \$2 (Ashby, Rt1 Box 72B, Crimora VA 24431) Someone got a little carried away with the fonts in his new computer, I think. Anyway, the usual punkzine stuff - interviews with Step Ahead, Side Over, Confusion, Forethought, and Reformation, a short piece on becoming a vegetarian, reviews.

Help Wanted No Experience Necessary

Jersey Beat is looking for new people who would like to contribute interviews, columns, and photos. We especially need someone in the New Brunswick area and someone in South Jersey familiar with the Brighton Bar band scene. If you enjoy going to shows, take photos of bands, enjoy listening to new music and would like to try writing about it, why not get in touch? There's no money but it's a lot of fun, great exposure if you want to get into writing (Jersey Beat alumni work everywhere from the New York Times to the Chicago Sun-Times,) you can go to shows on the guest list, and you get to keep all the CD's and tapes you review. Just drop us a line with your interests and we'll get right back to you.

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#35 (Summer '88) - ED GEIN'S CAR, Danzig, Patti Smith, Friction Wheel

#36 (Winter '89) - ULTRA VIVID SCENE, Crocodile Shop, Stetz, Bad Karma, Uncle Bob Touched Me, Scum Rock

#37 - Sold Out

#38 (Fall '89) THE SECRET LIVES OF PUNK ROCK DRUMMERS; American Standard, Orifice, Shades Apart, Kings X, White Zombie pinup

#39 (Winter, 1990) BASS PLAYERS: Things That Go Thump In The Night; Das Damen, Supertouch, Big Wheel, Best of 1989 lists

#40 (Summer 1990) KRYST THE CONQUEROR (Ex-Misfits Tell All); Jawbreaker, Adrenalin O.D., Bedlam Hour

#41 (Fall 1990) YO LA TENGO, Nine Inch Nails, Crawlppappy, Lost tour diary, Chikara

#42 (Winter 1991) WEEN: The Untold Story; Lucy Brown, Anthrophobia, Invasion Of The Generic Funk Weenies Pt. 1

#43 (Summer 1991) BEWITCHED, Butthole Surfers, Junk Monkeys, Springhouse, Deviators

#44 (Fall/Winter 1991) SINGLES: Special Report On The Underground World of 7-Inch Vinyl; Rollins, Fiendz

#45 (Winter 1992) NIRVANA: Talkin' Shit With The Gods Of Grunge; Undead, Our American Cousins

#46 (Summer 1992) 10TH ANNIVERSARY ISSUE; False Prophets: A History Of NY Hardcore, Firehose, Lester Bangs interview, Trusty, Sweet Lizard Illtet, L7

#47 (Fall 1992) SCREECHING WEASEL; Faith No More, Senseless Things, Letch Patrol, Lemonheads

#48 (Winter 1993) QUICKSAND; Down By Law's Dave Smalley, EMF, Ween blows us off, Dandelion Fire

#49 (Summer 1993) NEW JERSEY: A State Of The State Report; Whatever Happened To Hoboken?, New Brunswick Scene Report, South Jersey - White Trash Heaven, NJ Hip Hop, Hardcore Scene Report by Mat Gard, Black Train Jack, Sons Of Elvis

All back issues are \$2 each, postpaid. Send cash or money order to: Jersey Beat, 418 Gregory Ave, Weehawken NJ 07087

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